

**TOWARD MORE DESIRABLE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS  
FOR PASTORAL CARE AND MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH:  
CASE STUDIES FOR INTERMARRIED FAMILIES  
(KOREAN WIVES – AMERICAN HUSBANDS)**

**A Professional Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the  
Claremont School of Theology**

**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry**

**by  
Kyung Soo Kim**

**May 1999**

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*This professional project, completed by*

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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the  
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## **Abstract**

### **Toward More Desirable Family Relationships**

#### **For Pastoral Care and Ministry in the Church: Case Studies**

#### **For Intermarried Families (Korean Wives-American Husbands)**

by

**Kyung Soo Kim**

Intermarried families in the United States are growing increasingly in number. The problems in an intermarried family are different from those in a regular family. Intermarriage has three categories: interfaith, interracial, and interethnic. To treat these unique cultural problems of intermarriage, it is necessary to understand the theoretical basis of intermarriage and ethnicity. However, there are common problems in every family regardless of ethnicity. There are problems related to family relationships.

Four major family relationships are husband-wife, parent-child, siblings, and in-laws. To deal with these four relationships, four intermarried cases are examined: Korean wife-Thai American husband (husband-wife relationship); Korean wife-Japanese American husband (parent-child relationship); Korean wife-Caucasian American husband (siblings' relationship); and Korean wife-Filipino American husband (in-law relationship). These intermarried cases show problems and characteristics of the four major relationships in the family. This project does not only focus on case studies, but also on the four major family relationships. The project proposes more desirable family relationships for pastoral care and ministry in the church.

To understand the problems in the four major family relationships, important concepts of the theory and therapy of Murray Bowen are explored. Particularly important concepts that are applicable to over-all characteristics of the family are the differentiation of self, which is the cornerstone of Bowen's theory, triangle, and nuclear family emotional system. Studies of Bowen's theory and therapy are applied to the intermarried Korean family through the case studies relating to four major family relationships. The notions of coaching and genogram are also used in the four family cases.

In addition, the project examines the theological implication about family relationships through the meaning of the metaphor of the Family of God, the interpretation of theological doctrine of Imago Dei, and the theological implication of Trinitarian *perichoresis*. The term *perichoresis* has a possibility of serving as a theological model of family relationship for pastoral care and ministry of the church as the twenty-first century approaches.

With all of these understandings of intermarriage and ethnic families, the characteristics of the military family, the investigation of the Korean family system, the important concepts based on Bowen theory and therapy, and a theological perspective of family relationships, the project applies and interprets the four cases.

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## Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction .....	1
Problem and Issues .....	1
Methodology and Limitations .....	6
2. Case Studies : Intermarried Families (Korean Wives-American Husbands) ...	12
Husband-Wife Relationship: Korean Wife-Thai American Husband .....	12
Parent-Child Relationship: Korean Wife-Japanese American Husband .....	15
Siblings' Relationship: Korean Wife-Caucasian American Husband .....	18
In-Laws Relationship: Korean Wife-Filipino American Husband .....	22
3. Theoretical Understanding of Intermarriage .....	27
Reality of Intermarriage .....	27
Definition and Facts : Intermarriage in Hawaii .....	27
Theoretical Models for Intermarriage: Assimilation Model and Structural Model .....	31
Theoretical Basis for Intermarriage Therapy: Eco-systemic Approach.....	34
Ethnicity and Intermarriage .....	37
Ethnicity and Family Therapy: Overview .....	37
Asian American Families .....	39
Thai Family .....	43
Japanese Family .....	45
Filipino Family .....	48

Caucasian American Family .....	51
Military Family: Asian-Wife Intermarriage in the U. S. Military .....	53
4. Investigation of the Korean Family System .....	59
Background: Historical and Socio-cultural Perspective .....	59
The Traditional Confucian Family System .....	63
The Contemporary Korean Family System .....	66
Conflicts between the Traditional and the Contemporary Korean Family System .....	70
Korean American Family in the United States .....	71
Korean Women in the Intermarried Family System .....	75
5. Understanding of Bowen Theory and Therapy .....	79
Basic Characteristics of Bowen Theory .....	81
Eight Concepts of Bowen Theory: Meaning and Characteristics .....	83
The Differentiation of Self .....	84
Triangles (Emotional Triangles) .....	89
Nuclear Family Emotional System .....	91
Family Projection Process .....	93
Multigenerational Transmission Process .....	94
Sibling Position .....	96
Emotional Cutoff .....	98
Societal Regression .....	99
Bowen Theory in Therapy .....	101
The Evaluation Interview .....	102



The Genogram .....	103
Family Intervention Techniques .....	106
6. A Theological Perspective of Family Relationships for Pastoral Care and Ministry in the Church .....	112
The Metaphor of the Family of God and Family Relationships .....	113
The Interpretation of Theological Doctrine of Imago Dei .....	116
The Theological Implication of Trinitarian Perichoresis .....	119
7. Application and Interpretation to Four Cases .....	124
The Mala Family .....	124
The Ito Family .....	128
The Jackson Family .....	133
The Santiago Family .....	139
8. Conclusion .....	144
Summary .....	144
Prospect: Possibilities .....	150
 Bibliography .....	 153

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### Problems and Issues

Career or family? What is the priority to the military personnel and their spouses in the United States? This question, that almost every married couple has, was asked to me by a few military intermarried couples when I ministered for the Korean Chapel at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii in 1997. The Korean Chapel was one of five different Protestant Chapels: Traditional worship service, Contemporary worship service, Jewish service, Gospel service (Black-centered), and Korean service. Of course, they have Roman Catholic worship service. Though I ministered only for a short time, my experience was primarily with ministering to the composed of Korean immigrant wives and military American husbands.

A Korean family, or an American family? What can we call the family of a Korean woman who married an American man, or vice versa? It is not a Korean family, nor an American family. Or, it is not a Korean American family. It is called by the term intermarriage. The term “intermarriage” generally refers to “a marriage in which the parties’ racial, ethnic, national, or religious backgrounds differ.”<sup>1</sup> However, specifically intermarriage refers to “interracial or interethnic marriage.”<sup>2</sup> Gin Yong Pang, who is teaching in the Asian American Studies Department at San Francisco State University

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<sup>1</sup> Man Keung Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C Thomas Publisher, 1990), v.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

and is currently working on a book about Asian American intermarriage, also defines intermarriage as “marriage that involves spouses who come from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.”<sup>3</sup> Intermarriage, therefore, includes both interracial and interethnic marriages.

Intermarriage, like any other marriage, is “a continuous process in which two individuals learn to live together.”<sup>4</sup> The intermarried couple, like any other couple, begin to learn how to adjust to each other from the day they married. However, because they have lived in different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, the intermarried couples have to add racial or ethnic differences in values, customs, and traditions to the normal differences in personality, social class, education, and life experience. Therefore, their adjustments seem to have double the difficulties of those couples with a common background.<sup>5</sup>

Generally, “adjustment problems in racial and ethnic intermarriage can be traced to two major sources: one is the ecological or person-in environment barrier and the other is the couple’s interaction as husband and wife and as parents.”<sup>6</sup> Specifically, problems with military married couples can be summarized as follows: “first, economics, which no doubt, are present in most marriages across the board, military or not; second, the extremely high rate of mobility; third, the absence of the service member from the home

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<sup>3</sup> Gin Yong Pang, “Intraethnic, Interracial, and Interethnic Marriages among Korean American Women,” in Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism, eds. Young I. Song and Ailee Moon (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 135.

<sup>4</sup> Man Keung Ho, Building a Successful Intermarriage, between Religions, Social Classes, Ethnic Groups, or Races (St. Meinrad, Ind.: Abbey Press, 1984), 49.

<sup>5</sup> Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

for periods of time; fourth, other absence related problems such as the re-entry of the absent spouse into the family unit; and finally, the military career itself.”<sup>7</sup>

Considering both general problems in an intermarriage and specific problems in a military marriage, I will rearrange these problems for Korean women married to American husbands, either military or civilian. They can be categorized as follows: problems caused by cultural conflict, by social factors, by the military personnel situation; and by husband-wife marital relationship.

First, the problems in the cultural conflict are those caused by the relationships between Korean and American cultures. There are two cultures in one family. This problem is related with not only the relationship between a long-rooted traditional Korean culture and the contemporary Korean culture in a changing society, but also the relationship between this “double” Korean culture and American culture. The “double” means that Korean Americans in the United States have both the traditional and contemporary Korean culture. Because recent Korean immigrants (“the third wave”)<sup>8</sup> have contact with Korea through newspaper, radio, television, telephone, and frequent trans-Pacific travel the congruence of values, family patterns and cultural values are

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas P. Doyle, “The Marriages of Military Personnel: A Special Question,” Military Chaplain's Review 29, no. 4 (winter 1998) : 32-33.

<sup>8</sup> Bok-Lim C. Kim, “Korean Families,” in Ethnicity and Family Therapy, eds. Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano and John K. Pearce (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), 283. Kim says, “Korean immigration to the United States occurred in three distinct waves. The first consisted of only 7,000 farmers who came to Hawaii between 1903 and 1905.... The second wave began around 1950, when a significant number of Koreans war-orphans and *Amerasian* children arrived as adopted children of American parents. About this time, Korean women married to U.S. servicemen began to immigrate in large numbers.... The third wave of Korean immigration began with the passage of the 1965 Amendment to the Immigration and Naturalization Service Act of 1955, which ushered a new era of racial and ethnic equality in American immigration policy” (282).

remarkably similar to those in Korea.<sup>9</sup> In the intermarried family, the cultural conflict such as two cultures in one family can affect the relationships between individuals in the family. Needless to say the husband-wife relationship in different ethnic backgrounds can affect indirectly the parent-child, especially mother-child relationship, even the relationship of siblings who are growing up in different tradition, customs and life's value.

Second, the problems in the social maladjustment that come from outside sources such as the closed-mind relationships among family members including both parents, siblings, and relatives, improper financial management including employment and job promotion discrimination, and local community or other church members' negative attitudes. Especially, in the Korean intermarried family, the problem of the in-law relationship is a severe conflict.

Third, the problems in the military unique situation are the extremely high rate of mobility, the absence from the home for periods of time, and other related problems aside from the absences themselves. Military families are asked to completely uproot and resettle every three or four years. This means "they never experience the stability of settling into a community, nor the immediate support of relatives and hometown friends."<sup>10</sup> In fact, these frequent moves and separation from the extended family often may have their most serious affect on the dependent spouse and their children. Also, the military members, either Army, Navy, or Air Force personnel, are often required to be

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<sup>9</sup> Bok-Lim C. Kim, "Korean Families," 283.

<sup>10</sup> Doyle, 33.

absent from the home for from several days to a year in peacetime and for longer than a year if it is a conflict-situation. Aside from the absence, there are other related problems. For example, “the military member must not only re-enter the spouse-life, but he or she must also re-establish themselves as a parent.”<sup>11</sup> This can cause the problem of the parent-child relationship. And one final aspect of marital stress that seems to be unique to the military has to do with allegiance to “the military career itself.”<sup>12</sup> Their spouses have often stated that “the military spouse is married to the military service as well as to the spouse, and they are expected to be equally dedicated to the military and to make many unique sacrifices in the marital relationship for the sake of the officer’s career.”<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the problems caused by husband-wife interaction include those such as the communication difficulties, low self-esteem, sexual maladjustment, and clashed-views in childbearing practices. These problems focus on the interrelationships between husband and wife, and between parent and child.

However, I will focus on various relationships between the family members, because these problems (in the intermarried family) are caused by family relationships in conflict. Among them, four major family relationships between individuals that every family basically has are: (1) husband-wife relationship; (2) parent-child relationship; (3) siblings’ relationship; and (4) in-law relationship. This project will explore these four major family relationships.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

### **Methodology and Limitations**

For almost ten years, I had ministered a few Korean churches both in Korea and the United States: I counseled cases of broken families with severe marital conflicts, children's problems due to the parents, and a few cases connected to social crimes. In Hawaii, I experienced a kind of special ministry for the intermarried couples. I met some intermarried couples in the church and outside as well. Some of them, either military or civilian family, needed a kind of pastoral counseling. However, to effectively counsel the intermarried couple, I needed to understand the spouse's basic culture and tradition or identity and life's value. I tried to accept, what was, but it was not easy, because their husbands did not want to be counseled. I was only able to counsel the Korean wife, except in a few cases. This is a big limitation in case studies. From the stories of the intermarried Korean wives, I was able to piece together the husband's cultural identity and value system in the familial relationship.

For this project I selected four cases according to the four major family relationships: (1) husband-wife relationship; (2) parent-child relationship; (3) siblings' relationship; and (4) in-law relationship. Here I introduce only four ethnic intermarried couples and their important problems. I will explain these relationships in detail in Chapter 2.

First case for husband-wife relationship is a family of a Korean wife intermarried with a Thai Husband. They are both American, and can be called Korean-American woman (wife) and Thai-American man (husband). The husband is not a military, but, at that time, was unemployed. The unemployment, gambling, and dissipation caused problems between this husband-wife relationship. They are in a crisis of divorce.

Second case is about the parent-child relationship in a family that the Korean American wife intermarried with a Japanese American husband. The husband is not in the military, however, he has a son from an ex-wife. After they got divorced, he saw his son once a week. In this marriage he also has a son. The problem began because the Japanese husband preferred his first son to his second son. They have a parenting role conflict between the two sons.

Third case involves siblings' relationship in a family that the Korean American wife married with a Caucasian American Military husband. The husband is in the military, and has custody of his daughter from a previous marriage. This marriage has resulted in two more children one daughter, one son. The problem is caused by his first daughter's rejection of her two siblings, especially her sister. They are battles between two sisters by a different mother.

Last case involves for in-law relationship in a family that the Korean American wife intermarried with a Filipino American husband. The husband is military. The problem is an extremely hostile relationship between the husband and his mother-in-law. The wife has lived with her mother from childhood. After the mother-in-law got divorced, she lived with the daughter. When the couple got married, the mother-in-law continued to live with them. The hostile relationship between the husband and mother-in-law became more and more serious. They squeeze the wife/daughter while blaming each other.

In summary, these four case studies are two military husbands and two divorced husbands with children from the ex-wife. Each husbands is from a different ethnic background: Thai, Japanese, Filipino, and Caucasian American, while the wives were all



Korean American women.

With these different intermarried cases, I have tried to show the four major relationships in the family. This project is not only focused on case studies, but also on the four major relationships as seen in the studies. This project is a search for a more desirable family relationship for pastoral care and ministry in the church. The important work will be in focusing on how to relate and apply the family therapy theories into the family relationships of the intermarriage setting. And additional focus will be on how to integrate family therapy theories and the theological consideration on the family relationships.

For theoretical understanding, I referred to Murray Bowen's collected papers, Family Therapy in Clinical Therapy (1978), Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory (1988) by Michael E. Kerr and Murray Bowen, and Working with Relationship Triangles (1996) by Philip J. Guerlin, Jr. et al. And for the understanding of intermarriage and ethnicity, I referred to Intermarried Couples in Therapy (1990) by Man Keung Ho, and Ethnicity and Family Therapy (1996) edited by Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano and John K. Perace. There are many books and articles about understanding of Korean and Korean American family system, however, for this project I referred mainly to Korean Immigrants in America (1984) by Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, and Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism (1998) edited by Young I. Song and Ailee Moon. In addition, I referred to project books and articles to get the necessary information and subject for the process of this project.

Two professional projects at the Claremont School of Theology have been written

on Korean families.<sup>14</sup> The setting for these projects is generally the Korean American family or the Korean immigrant family in the United States, not the intermarried Korean family. Also these projects are directed mainly toward the psychological or sociological perspective. They were very helpful in understanding the Korean American of the Korean immigrant family for an objective look at designing my own project. They did not give me a theological perspective or model on the Korean family for pastoral care and ministry in the church.

Concerning the theological perspective I suggest that the works of Jürgen Moltmann, Leonard Boff, and Catherine Mowry LaCugna, provide the idea of the Trinitarian *perichoresis* and suggest the application of a theological perspective for the family relationship.<sup>15</sup>

This project will focus on the four major relationships in the family. It will reveal the problems of the family relationships through four case studies. Exploring these four major relationships in the family I will search for more desirable family relationships for pastoral care and ministry in the church.

Chapter 2 explores the problems in the four major family relationships. Four case studies are presented: a Korean wife-Thai American husband for husband-wife relationship; a Korean wife-Japanese American husband for parent-child relationship; a

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<sup>14</sup> See Tae Joon Cho, Marital Conflict and Stability among Korean Immigrants in the United States, D.Min. Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1990 (Ann Arbor, UMI, 1990); and Heisik Oh, Marriage Enrichment in the Korean Immigrant Church, D.Min. Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1987, (Ann Arbor, UMI, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> See especially Jürgen Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of the God, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Leonardo Boff, Trinity and Society, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988); and Catherine M. LaCugna, God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991).

Korean wife-Caucasian American husband for sibling's relationship; and a Korean wife-Filipino American husband for in-law relationship.

Chapter 3, in order to clearly understand these four major relationships in the family, exercises the theoretical understanding of the intermarriage, the intercultural view of the ethnic families such as Thai families, Japanese families, Filipino families, and Caucasian families, and the characteristics of the military intermarried couple. And in Chapter 4 investigates the characteristics of the Korean family system and Korean women in the intermarried family system.

Chapter 5 discusses proper treatment of the problems in these four major family relationships, and explores eight important concepts and characteristics of the Bowen Theory. These concepts are as follow: "the Differentiation of the self," the cornerstone in Bowen's theory, "Triangles," "Nuclear family emotional system," "Family projection process," "Multigenerational Transmission Process," "Sibling position," "Emotional Cutoff," and "Societal Regression." And it also explores the Bowen Theory in Therapy.

Chapter 6 proposes the family relationships for pastoral care and ministry in the Church with a theological perspective. It explores the meaning of the metaphor of "the Family of God" and the family relationships, the interpretation of the theological doctrine of "Imago Dei (Image of God)" and the family relationships, and the theological implication of the Trinitarian "*perichoresis*" and the family relationships.

Chapter 7 applies and interprets, with important concepts based on the Bowen Theory, these four cases selected for the four major family relationships. The evaluation of a family begins with the family interview. I format the family evaluation interview: history of the presenting problems, history of the nuclear family, history of extended

family system, family genogram, and interpretation of the data. Some case data are insufficient to evaluate effectively because of short interviews and irregular sessions. My focus is how to evaluate the four relationship-problems in the family, especially within the intermarried family.

And lastly, Chapter 8 summarizes the project, and then, for my next work, I propose the possibilities of a Trinitarian *perichoresis* model that considers the theological dimension of the family relationships as crucial for the pastoral care and ministry of the church as the twenty-first century approaches.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Case Studies: Intermarried Families (Korean Wives-American Husbands)**

I will present four case examples connected with four major relationships in the family for this project. Through these cases, I will examine what the problems are in the four major family relationships in intermarriages particularly. They all have unique problems that are related to the cultural and ethnic perspective. All the wives in these cases are Korean American women who married other ethnic Americans. All names used in these cases are fictitious for confidential reasons.

#### **Husband-Wife Relationships: The Korean Wives-Thai American Husband**

Jin-suk Mala, a 29 years old Korean woman, married a Thai American, man 32 years old named Sak Mala, 7 years ago (1991) at Seoul. Two years after they married, the family moved to America (1993). They had two young daughters, 4 years and 1 year old. Her husband was in the military when they married at Seoul. One year after returning to the United States; he quit the army because of uncertainty of his future life. At first he could find a good job as a carpenter. However, as the construction business slowed jobs became harder to find. Unemployment made the family anxious and caused severe financial problems. The husband began to prowls the streets, drink, and gamble. At a club, he met a Mexican woman and borrowed money with which to gamble. The Mexican woman was already separated from her family (not yet divorced), and she had her own room. The Thai husband sometimes stayed at the Mexican woman's house.

One night Jin-suk called to me. She said crying, "Rev. Kim, I am in the hospital now. Please help me. Could you come here now?" I went to the hospital at once. A nurse

guided me to the emergency room. Jin-suk was sitting on a wheel chair with patient clothing on. I heard the whole story of the incident that day. Her husband punished her and she got a bruise on the leg slipping. Above all, she was afraid of him and called emergency service. For a few weeks, Jin-suk and her husband talked about his gambling and his staying away from home. Her husband was disappointed by unemployment, hurt by being rejected from the society, and was filled with the illusion of making a lot of money at one time through gambling. Her husband also felt lonely.

While Jin-suk and I were talking, her sister-in-law (the wife of her husband's younger brother), a Japanese American woman, arrived. Her sister-in-law looked like a kind, polite, and modest woman. I left there after setting an appointment to meet her.

Before the second appointment, Jin-suk called me and said that she returned home. By phone, I got one important piece of information about her life. When she was asked about her family including her mother, she was angry, saying, "Don't speak out about my mom any more. Whenever I think of my mom, Oh! No, stop!" I couldn't ask about it any more, however, I could guess. When she married her present husband at Seoul, her mother might have strongly opposed her intermarriage. Because later she said "I had never met her (Jin-suk's mother), nor communicated with her since I came here (America)." I thought that Jin-suk had been deeply hurt in her own mind by the relationship between her and her mother. On the one hand, she had the feeling of rejection and anger about her mother; on the other hand, she had a little guilty conscience about her mother.

The next meeting was in her house with other faithful friends including my wife. Jin-suk and I had not talked much about her personal story; however, she was at a loss

whenever her husband wanted to have sex, because they had only one bedroom. With two young daughters, she did not want to have sex in the same room. Jin-suk said, “Sometimes even he wanted to do it on the sofa while the children were sleeping on the bed. I couldn’t, and I hated that.” Jin-suk didn’t know what to do next. She had low self-esteem (in the concept of Bowen’s theory, a low differentiation of self), as generally many rural Korean women have.

The problems Jin-suk had were from my observations as follows: (1) rejection from her mother who strongly opposed intermarriage with traditional Korean cultural value, and her thereby hurt and shirking attitude; (2) weak understanding of the cultural and societal values that Thai males generally have, even though her husband was an American military for three years and lived in the United States continually; and (3) her own low self-esteem and diffidence by various factors such as difficult language communication, maladjustment to the United States life, etc.

What Jin-suk needed in order to be helped was first the physical temporary separation from her husband, second the psychological acceptance from anyone as she is, and third the spiritual rest for support and care. And then she will slowly, slowly begin to have conversations about what the problems really are where they began and how she can manage them effectively. I think she needs to restore her self, vitality-in-self. In the term of Bowen’s theory, she needs a strong differentiation of self. In other words, she needs to look at herself objectively. If she had a new notion of the differentiation of self, she will be able to overcome her marital crisis.

To treat the case well and effectively, it is necessary to understand on a theoretical basis of intermarriage such as cultural consideration including the Thai family, to

investigate the characteristics of the Korean family system, especially of Korean American Women in the intermarriage family system, and understand the theoretical framework of family therapy models including Murray Bowen's theory, in particular.

**Parent-Child Relationship: Korean Wife-Japanese American Husband**

Sun-suk Ito, a 26 year-old Korean Women, married a Japanese American named Ben Ito. Ben was a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Japanese who had his own-business. He was not in the military. After his divorce in 1993, he remarried his present wife the year after (1994). He is 42 years old now. Though the couple had a big age gap (38 years old groom and 22 years old bride), they loved each other. According to Sun-suk, her family first opposed the intermarriage; however, later they accepted it and celebrated the couple. Sun-suk's family probably thought that marrying a millionaire could make her happy. The marriage was not wrong. Everything except the age gap was good.

A problem developed. Ben had a 13 years old son, Ted, by his the former wife. That is, he was 8 years old when Ito got divorced. The son lives with the ex-wife in Hawaii. And Ben and Sun-suk had another son. The new son, John, became 3 years old. As Ben had a new son, he began to prefer the son by the former wife over the new son. According to Sun-suk, Ben gave the son by the former wife everything he wanted; while Ben did not even buy a little toy for his new son. This was an exaggeration, but, Ben gave the son by the former wife a great deal more affection than the new son. Ben was feeling in conflict between the son by the former wife and the son by the present wife.

One day Sun-suk called to me, and said "Rev. Kim. I don't know how to face the son by the former wife. He will visit our house this coming Saturday. I don't know what



to do.” I asked a few questions, and then I made an appointment to visit her house with my wife personally.

Sun-suk knew that Ben had a son by the former wife before she married. Then, she wasn’t worried about that, because the ex-wife decided to raise the son. Initially Sun-suk thought vaguely about the son by the former wife. But now the problem became a reality. The thought she had been duped put her at a loss. Sun-suk thought that she was too young to accept the fact. She could somewhat accept it in her head; it was not easy for her to accept the whole thing in her heart. It was natural it couldn’t be helped, considering her age. But Sun-suk should confront the fact. It was first time she would meet the son by the former wife. Sun-suk clearly said, “Of course, I have a little unfair feeling about Ben who decided by himself the schedule for visit, however I love Ben and Ben loves me. It is unchangeable. I can understand Ben’s situation. I know Ben... The problem is how to meet the son by the former wife one time every other week from now on. I didn’t think the position of the second wife was so difficult.” Sun-suk did not regret the intermarriage but could not fully accept herself as a stepmother to the son by the former wife.

Another problem was Ben’s attitude toward the two sons. One day the next week I met Ben with his son by the former wife for a short time. The son by the former wife was a little taller for his age, looked smart. Actually, Ben was worried about the relationship between the two sons and two wives. As a divorced man, he did not love the ex-wife any more, but did love much more the son by the former wife than his new son like a baby yet.

Through this case, I want to explore the parent-child relationships, in general, and an examination about divorce and parent-child relationship, in particular. In the Ito family, it is the parent-child relationship after divorce. The present problems the Ito family has are as follows: (1) the postdivorce father's more unfair affection for the son by the former wife than the son by the present wife; (2) the present wife's predication to accept as a stepmother the son by the former wife; and (3) the parent's important task to solve for their high marital quality how to give fair affection to both sons by the former wife and by the present wife.

What Sun-suk needed to be helped first for the process of treatment, I thought, was to have the perspective to be able to look at herself objectively under the stress through the understanding of the notion of differentiation of self as the term of Bowen's theory, and the ability to openly accept her position as stepmother to the son by the former wife. If she can view herself and her position objectively and openly, she will welcome the son by the former wife when he visits her house, and also avoid the comparisons between the son by the former wife and her own son. And then her husband, as a noncustodial father, will give his affections fairly to both sons. Sin-suk can then increase the quality of marital relationship with her husband.

To treat the case well and effectively, it is necessary to understand and examine the basic background of parent-child relationships after divorce, especially the relations between children and noncustodial parents, usually the father, after divorce. Also, it is necessary to understand the concept of triangle, especially stepparent triangle. And it is necessary to understand the marital conflicts of the Korean American Women remarried

as an intermarried couples including the cultural differences between the Japanese and Korean family systems.

**Siblings' Relationship: Korean Wife-Caucasian American Husband**

Mi-suk Jackson, a 34 years old Korean American woman, married a 41 year-old Caucasian American military husband named Ronald Jackson, in 1988 in Honolulu without a formal wedding ceremony. They have lived in Hawaii for almost ten years since marriage. Ronald Jackson married a Filipino woman when he was 20 years old (1977), and then divorced her at 30 years old (1987) after ten years. He had two children – one son and one daughter – by the former wife. The son named Peter, is 19 years old now, has also become a soldier. The daughter named Anna has lived with her father, from 6 years old to 16 years old, ever since her parents got divorced. Ronald has two more children by his present wife – one daughter and one son. The daughter named Carol is 8 years old; the son named Bob is 5 years old. Mi-suk has raised four children including two children by the former wife.

According to Mi-suk, some of the difficulties in her family was, and is, the relationship with Peter and Anna, the children by the former wife. A difficulty was to leave Korea to marry especially intermarriage with an American military. After graduating high school, when Mi-suk worked as an assistant accountant in the office at the United States military Army in Seoul, she met Ronald and fell in love.

Mi-suk's father passed away when she was a childhood (17 years old, 1977). Mi-suk had three younger brothers. Their family life was very poor. As a single mother, Mi-suk worked hard in other to educate the three younger brothers. Mi-suk herself graduated only high school, but she wanted to live well with her mother and younger brothers. Even

though Ronald had experienced one marriage and two children (at that time a 10 year old son and 9 year-old daughter) by the former wife, Mi-suk was sure that marrying an American military man a degree would give her and her family some good chances for the future. Now, Ronald is studying to obtain a Master of Computer Science degree.

I had several irregular encounters with Mi-suk. I also met Ronald two or three times, however, because of the short meetings without form. I did not share any deep conversations with him. I have met their children except Peter. This case was not an official session to solve the problems, but was a kind of spiritual conversation or some practical guidance as a pastor. Whenever I talked to her, some conversations included the problems within her family.

Mi-suk has been seriously ill with diabetes, endometriosis, and chronic indigestion. She has taken several medicines. Doctors said to take a good and long rest; but she couldn't do that because of the children and the household's situation. I have given some comfort and hope. The problems Mi-suk has seem to derive from the marriage itself, but that is the situation she selected. The important thing was how she would treat her situation of the family. One day Mi-suk said to me, "Rev. Kim, I will never divorce my husband whatever may happen, because I know how our children will be going on. I love them. I raised up Peter and Anna like my offspring too. Now, it is difficult for me how to deal with Anna. I understand Anna's personality and her adolescent period. Rev. Kim, yesterday Anna hit Carol because she got a scolding from her dad." I asked what happened. She explained "last week Anna got a Fail report on one subject." "How did she do?" "She submitted blank sheet on the test."

A few days later, my wife and I had a chance to meet Mi-suk, Anna, Carol, and Bob with my wife at the supermarket. We sat around the table eating some pizza. I remembered the fact that Anna hit Carol. But they looked like they had no problem. I asked Anna, "Hi, Anna. What is going on in your school?" Anna said, "That's O.K. No problem." Carol said, "Today is Anna's birthday." "Oh, really? I will give you a good present. What do you want, Anna?" Anna answered simply, "I want my own room." "What? Your own room?" Mi-suk was quite at a loss what to do. I said, "Carol might bother you." "Yes, I hate Carol!" Now Carol shouted, "I hate Anna, too." I asked smiling to Carol, "Why do you hate Anna?" "I don't know, because Anna hates me." Mi-suk tried to get her not to speak any more, and I couldn't continue. A few minutes later we said good-bye each other. Leaving I asked Carol, "Carol, today is Anna's birthday, as you said. Did you prepare Anna's birthday present?" "No." "It is better for you to prepare something for Anna. Think about it."

Thereafter I talked to Mi-suk by phone. "Mi-suk, please don't worry about Anna and Carol too much. It is true that Anna wanted to have her own room. I understand your situation. Did you talk to your husband about it?" "No, not yet. It's useless. We have no idea." "Please talk to Ronald about the whole thing. He could have a good idea." "Yes, I'll think it over." "You have three rooms, you know. Who uses the third room?" "Bob." "Bob is 5 years old, right?" "Yes." "Please discuss this with Ronald." "Give Anna an opportunity and she will be kind and generous to Carol as well as you."

A few weeks later, I heard the news that the Jackson family will move to another state. Mi-suk said, "Ronald promised it to Anna. Anna's attitude to Carol is changing better than in the past." I wished Anna could have her own room. Rather than that, I

wished Anna would be stronger in her self. Even if Mi-suk is a stepmother to Anna, I wish Anna would think of Mi-suk as a real mother. Then, Anna will be mature.

The problems Mi-suk had in conflicts were as follows: (1) difficulties in the relationship with two children by the former wife; (2) a 16 year-old adolescent girl, doing poorly in school as demonstrated by recently submitting a blank paper during an examination and Anna's severe hostility towards Carol; the younger daughter; (3) Anna's disobedience to parent and parent's psychological dilemma about unsuccessfully dealing with Anna.

This case was complicated and complex to treat. The relationships in the family had several factors. But I want to focus on the siblings' relationship that was becoming more and more severe. The sibling's relationship is the relationship between Anna, a 16 year-old adolescent daughter by the former wife, and Carol, 8 year-old daughter by the present wife. Typically, this is a problem of divorce and parent-child relationship. Parent-child relationships after divorce are often problematic. It is not surprising that divorce is followed by a further deterioration in the fathers' relations with their children. I will examine how parenting styles and parent-child relationships influence the ways that the developing adolescents cope with other siblings', especially within two sisters by a different mother after divorce.

To treat the case well and effectively, it is necessary to understand (1) the basics of parent-child relationships after divorce. This differs from the case of the Ito family, which was a non custodial relationship child –parent; (2) a study of the effect between the sibling relationships and the marital conflicts, especially of the Korean American Women remarried as an intermarried couples including the marital family; and (3) the adolescent

characteristics and their reaction to different parental style, especially of the stepmother and biological father.

### **In-laws Relationship: Korean Wife-Filipino American Husband**

Young-suk, a 34 year-old social worker Korean American women, married a Filipino military American, ten years ago (1988). Young-suk was an only daughter, and she lived with her mother since her parents divorced in 1968 when Young-suk was 4 years old. Young-suk didn't say a word about her parent divorce except her father's dissipation. Young-suk immigrated to the United States when she was 10 years old with her mother. Young-suk's mother, wanted to be called Jay, began to work hard for Young-suk. Young-suk was everything to Jay. Jay's younger sister has lived in Seattle and was the only relative in the United States, but the relationship between the two sisters was not intimate. Thanks to Jay, Young-suk could graduate from a university and became a social worker fluent in two languages a fluent bilingual.

Young-suk's husband, Nat Santiago, is a 32 year-old engineer, and was in the military. Nat had one older brother and one older sister. Nat's mother died when Nat was 12 years old, and his father, Agpalo, retired-military, remarried with an American woman, Emilia. According to Nat, his stepmother, Emilia, was quiet and reticent but didn't tell him of any concerns. After graduation from high school, Nat entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, because he wanted to be independent from his dad and stepmother. Nat said, "I had never met a military cadet except at my wedding ceremony ever since. They also never called me after the marriage. I do not have a good and pleasant memories form them. I was always alone."

Both Nat and Young-suk had a feeling of loneliness even though they were couple. Nat did not accept parental loving (especially in a warmhearted marital relationship). Nat's mother had died when he was young. Closely attached to her mother. Even after she got married, she was too tied to her mother to have an independent like. Now, Young-suk was in a dilemma between her mother, Jay, and her husband, Nat. Nat was also in a dilemma between his wife, Young-suk, and his mother-in-law, Jay. In the traditional Korean family, the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is usually problematic. However, in the Young-suk family case, it was reversed.

I first heard this story through a friend of mine. The friend let Nat call me. A few days later, Nat called me, and the session between Nat and myself. We initially promised to meet one time per week because I could almost understand his slow accented English. In the first session, I heard mainly his story from the present problem: A conflict between him and mother-in-law. Next week, I asked some questions about his childhood. I could get the important points such as the formative process in his personality development, because he explained all his experiences and feelings including his dad and stepmother. In the third session, he opened his heart to me about even sexual conflicts with his wife. I was a little at a loss what to do, but I could control my feeling well since I thought he disclosed even this story to me because he fully trusted me. From the fourth session, I began to focus on all the relationships surrounding him: the relationships with his wife, children, mother-in-law, dad, and even siblings.

Nat seemed like a strong person; he had a rigid self, affected by his dad and stepmother from childhood. Nat said, "One day, we didn't talk even a word during dinner. I was likely suffocated. I was an only thirteen year-old mischievous boy. I



couldn't bear, but couldn't help doing so. I made up my mind to wait until graduation in high school. But now I don't hate my dad. I do understand the my dad's situation having a laundry business as a retired military." "You mean," I asked, "Did you forgive your dad?" Nat answered, "Yes, I forgave my dad." I asked again, "How did you do so?" He said, "I am sending some money to my parent." I said, "What I mean is how did you recover the closed relationship between you and your dad?" He said, "I don't know very well, but now I don't hate him anymore." I didn't ask more, I felt his hurt mind made him rigid.

Thereafter, with his request, I could meet his wife. As a Korean, Young-suk seemed like facing saving, *Chae-myun*. Especially, as a social worker, she might already understand the process of a kind of counseling or therapy. Because of that, moreover, she didn't want to meet me. In the first meeting, Young-suk said, "I didn't want to disclose and discuss our *jip-an* (the term means literally within the house) problems to outside people even if you are a pastor." I said agreeing that, "Yes, you are right. I know your *Chae-myun* and the self-respect of you and your family. Also I understand your situation is most difficult among the members of your family. As you know, the in-law problem in the traditional Korean family is the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The husband is supposed to be in the go between, but in your family, you are in the mediator." After she heard my statement about her situation, her protective shell seemed to open a little. I continued "This is, as I understand, the problem that you and your husband, and especially your mother should solve in your family structure." Young-suk agreed to that.

After two more sessions with Nat, I met three people, Nat, Young-suk and her mother, Jay, who was a 58 year-old typical Korean woman. Originally Nat and I promised to meet at his home, where his mother-in-law was. His wife returned late at home while the three people talked. At the meeting, Jay did most of the talking. I first encouraged Jay's explanation of her many trials raising her grandchildren, a seven year-old girl and a four year-old boy, managing the housework. She did this because both her son-in-law and daughter had jobs. Before the meeting, I told Nat not to get angry or argue with her no matter what she said. I wanted to let her open her heart. I began to slowly open my statement about the in-law problem. Jay knew what the problem was. She began to blame her son-in-law, telling of his rude behavior to her, his facial expression towards her, and his rough attitude to the children among other things. (It was one-side blame. I also heard from Nat about Jay's similar behavior, expression, and attitude.) I said that I agree this was part of the problem, but the root of problem was the relationship between Jay and Nat, of course, adding my understanding of Jay's situation related to the relationship formed in between Jay and her daughter, Young-suk. Jay confessed, "Everything will be O.K. without me. I know, but I can't leave. Without Young-suk, my life is meaningless. This (her son-in-law) is likely a man who had never received any loving. He is a self-possessed and inhuman person. My daughter is so pitiful." I suggested carefully to Jay that she must live in her own house without worrying about this nuclear family, no matter how they live. I earnestly said, "Let your daughter leave. Now is the time to leave. It is up to you. Your daughter, Young-suk can never ever ask you about it. It is your business. Don't worry about it. The important thing is your life. Make sure you can live well without your daughter. Or, rather that, your life will be

better. Also your daughter and your son-in-law and your grandchildren will be better.

Let her leave.” Thereafter, I heard the news the family was to move elsewhere.

Through this case, I could ascertain how important the differentiation of self is, and could apply to the concept of in-law-triangle. The problems the Santiago family had can be summarized as follows: (1) Nat’s childhood without a warmhearted caring and loving parental guidance. This caused Nat to become a person interested in himself first, rather than the others around him. (2) Young-suk’s close attachment her mother caused by the continuing close family relationship since she lived in the same house; and (3) Jay’ fixation that she can not live without her daughter.

To treat the relational problems effectively, it is necessary for me to understand (1) the relationship between the divorced parent, and their children; (2) the characteristic of Filipino family, especially the values and behavior style of their unique class separation and the possibility that there maybe some type of threat in many interracial marriages, and the characteristics of the traditional Korean family, and (3) the theoretical issues in-law relationship and family therapy theories or models which are useful to treat the in-law relationships in Asian American families.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Theoretical Understanding of Intermarriage**

The four cases presented in Chapter 2 are all intermarried couples. Their families are all immigrant mixed couples: Korean American wives and ethnically different Asian American husbands and one European Caucasian. Now I will discuss the basic theoretical understanding of intermarriage for effective treatment of the cases. It will include the reality of intermarriage, ethnicity and intermarriage, and especially the characteristics of the Asian families such as Thai, Japanese, and Filipino families, as well as the general characteristics of the military family.

### **Reality of Intermarriage**

#### **Definition and Facts: Intermarriage in Hawaii**

According to Albert I. Gordon, who was a Jewish Rabbi for many years and wrote a book about intermarriage in 1964, there are three categories of intermarriage: interfaith, interracial, and interethnic. "The term intermarriage is generally applied to married people whose religious, racial, or ethnic background is or was different from each other's, either prior to or after their marriage."<sup>1</sup> Among these three categories, I will refer to the "interethnic" marriage related on the four cases presented in Chapter 2.

An interethnic marriage is the most common: a marriage in which each of the parties was reared in a cultural and national environment that differs from that of the other, even though their faith or their skin color are same.<sup>2</sup> For example, a Japanese

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<sup>1</sup> Albert I. Gordon, Intermarriage: Interfaith, Interracial, and Interethnic (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

Protestant differs in many ethnic characteristics from a Korean Protestant even though they have the same Asian skin color and the same religious faith.

The Mala Family could be regarded as an interfaith and interethnic marriage category on that point: A Thai (Asian) American Buddhist husband and a Korean (Asian) American Protestant wife. The Ito Family is an interethnic marriage, a “Japanese (Asian) American Protestant husband and a Korean (Asian) American Protestant wife. The Jackson Family is an interracial and interethnic marriage, a Caucasian (European) American Protestant husband and a Korean (Asian) American Protestant wife. And The Santiago Family is an interfaith and interethnic marriage, a Filipino (Asian) American Catholic husband and a Korean (Asian) American Protestant wife. Thus, the interethnic marriage could be regarded as the common factor in these case studies.

Ethnic identity has always been a central component of American life. Its salience is probably related to the fact that White ethnic groups are slowly becoming a minority of the population in the country, as McGoldrick and Giordano said that “by the end of the next century, White Americans will be a minority.”<sup>3</sup>

The 1990 Census listed 95 racial and ethnic categories and subcategories including White (53 group), Black, American Indian, Eskimo (or Aleut), and Asian (or Pacific Islanders), with 11 Asian and 15 Hispanic subcategories.<sup>4</sup> Asian Americans are one of the most highly diversified ethnic groups in the United State. The number of Asians in the United States increased from 3,466,847 in 1980 to 6,908,638 in 1990, a

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<sup>3</sup> Monica McGoldrick and Joe Giordano, “Overview: Ethnicity and Family Therapy,” in Ethnicity and Family Therapy, eds. Monica McGoldrick, Joe Giordano, and John K. Pearce (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 5.

99% increase, compared to a 53% increase for Hispanics and a 7% increase for the non-Hispanic population.<sup>5</sup> According to the source, the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1994), the resident populations of the Asian Americans in this study are: Filipino 1,407,000; Japanese 848,000; Korean 799,000; and Thai 91,000. This is as of the 1990 census.<sup>6</sup> They vary greatly in both cultural and physical characteristics. Their attitudes, values, and ethnic institutions often differ within Filipino American, Japanese American, Korean American, and Thai American communities. Asian-born Americans now outnumber European-born ones. In Los Angeles four in 10 residents are foreign born; in New York, there in 10.<sup>7</sup>

Intermarriage is occurring at triple the rate of the early 1970s. Many cultural groups have long had prohibitions against intermarriage, which is seen as a threat to group survival. Until 1967, when such laws were declared unconstitutional, 19 states prohibited racial intermarriage, but now, more than 50% of Americans are marrying out of their ethnic groups; 33 million American adults live in households where at least one other adult has a different religious identity.<sup>8</sup> Intermarriage greatly complicates those issues that partners from a single ethnic group face. Generally, the greater the cultural difference between spouses, the more trouble they will have in adjusting to marriage.

“Is it true,” Jay Williams asks a question, “that Brazil and Hawaii have been

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1994 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1994), 30, cited in James A. Banks, Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997), 434.

<sup>6</sup> Banks, 441.

<sup>7</sup> McGoldrick and Giordano, 5.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

exemplified as the lands of interracial harmony?" Quoting the views of two professors such as Reginald Daniel and Teresa Williams, Jay Williams answered "No."<sup>9</sup> Both Daniel and Williams agree that "Brazil and Hawaii are far from being perfect interracial society." Teresa Williams, a sociologist of Japanese-Anglo heritage, points to the different economic systems (e.g., sandalwood, whaling, sugar plantation, military, tourism) as having contributed to the depopulation of Native Hawaiians and the present-day multiracial "populace" of Hawaii. She also points to the plantation system as fostering the prejudices and stereotypes of the various ethnic groups in order to secure its paternalistic, divide-and-rule control, which still lingers today. For example, Hawaiians are lazy, happy-go-lucky; Japanese are sneaky and sly; Chinese are resourceful and stingy; Portuguese are slow-thinkers; Filipinos are flashy and colorful; Haoles are rich, abrasive, loud-mouthed, and etc.<sup>10</sup>

Why does Hawaii make an especially useful case for an intensive investigation of intermarriage? The state of Hawaii has a long history of being multiracial, with no single group constituting a majority of the island's population. Plantation owners played the major role in determining the timing and the composition of immigration.<sup>11</sup> Hawaiian society is noted as having "a remarkable degree of blending."<sup>12</sup> It is the only state in which whites are not in a numerical majority, and whose dominance in many fields is

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<sup>9</sup> Jay Williams, "Brazil and Hawaii: Paradise?" Interrace Magazine 41 (1998) : 1, on-line, available from Netscape @ <http://members.aol.com/interrace/letters41.html>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew W. Lind, "Immigration to Hawaii," Social Process in Hawaii 29 (1982): 13.

<sup>12</sup> Teresa Labov and Jerry A. Jacobs, "Intermarriage in Hawaii: 1950-1983," Journal of Marriage and the Family 48, no.1 (1986): 80.

being challenged by minority groups.<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Wittermans notes that “due to the rapid rise of Japanese, Korean, Chinese and other ethnic communities, both in socio-economic position and in the fields of learning as well as artistic pursuits, the Caucasian community no longer can be seen as the one dominate force in Hawaiian society.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Theoretical Models for Intermarriage: Assimilation Model and Structural Model**

Intermarriages between members of different groups in a heterogeneous society have been explained predominantly by two models: the assimilation model and the structural model. It is Milton Gordon who provides one of the most representative expositions of the assimilationist view; while Peter Blau provides the structuralist view.

Assimilation is “a process of boundary reduction that can occur when members of two or more societies or of small cultural groups meet.”<sup>15</sup> According to Gordon, immigrants often possess cultural traits and socioeconomic status that distinguish them from members of the host society. Their traits and status initially would hinder intimate interactions between the two groups. However, when they gradually overcome the cultural and socioeconomic barriers, more intimate relations would occur. The process of assimilation, therefore, can take from a few years to several generations depending on the initial cultural traits and socioeconomic status between the two groups.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Wittermans, “Inter-ethnic Relations in Hawaii,” Social Process in Hawaii 28 (1981) : 154.

<sup>15</sup> J. Milton Yinger, “Toward a Theory of Assimilation and Dissimilation” Ethnic and Racial Studies 4, no. 3 (1981) : 249.

<sup>16</sup> Milton Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 27.



The process of assimilation, in summary, Sean-Shong Hwang, Rogelio Saenz, and Benigno Aguirre identify as follows:

(1) it begins with acculturation such as learning and adopting the cultural patterns of the majority group; (2) it proceeds through structural assimilation such as achieving socioeconomic status comparable with those held by members of the majority group; and (3) it's completed when the ethnicity of immigrants is no longer a salient characteristic to themselves and to members of the host society.<sup>17</sup>

According to these assimilation theorists, assimilation "influences intermarriage by affecting the extent to which a minority member is accessible and acceptable as a potential marital partner to members of the dominant group."<sup>18</sup>

The structural perspective is particularly useful in understanding intergroup relations. According to Peter Blau, "intergroup relations depend not only on willingness among members of different groups to interact, but also on the opportunity to do so. That is, intergroup relations cannot take place unless opportunities for interactions exist."<sup>19</sup> Also, according to Hwang, Saenz, and Aguirre, "the opportunity for intergroup relationships is determined by community attributes such as the size of the minority, the availability of potential partners in the minority group, the availability of potential partners from out-groups, and the social and spatial proximity between the in-group and out-group."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Sean-Shong Hwang, Rogelio Saenz and Benigno E. Aguirre, "Structural and Assimilationist Explanations of Asian American Intermarriage," Journal of Marriage and the Family 59, no. 3 (1997): 759.

<sup>18</sup> Sean-Shong Hwang, Rogelio Saenz and Benigno E. Aguirre, "The SES (Socioeconomic Status) Selectivity of Interracially Married Asians," International Migration Review 29, no. 2 (1995): 472.

<sup>19</sup> Peter M. Blau, Inequality and Heterogeneity: A Primitive Theory of Social Structure (New York: Free Press, 1977), 100.

<sup>20</sup> Hwang et al., "Structural and Assimilationist Explanations of Asian American Intermarriage," 760.

The concept of heterogeneity has occupied a central location in Blau's structural theory. "Heterogeneity indicates the potential for intergroup encounters. It is frequently argued that high degrees of racial or ethnic heterogeneity promote intergroup contacts and, therefore, are conducive to intermarriage."<sup>21</sup> According to Kevin Fitzpatrick and Hwang, "although a high degree of heterogeneity may promote overall intermarriage in the community, the same condition can depress intermarriage rates for minority groups because of a built-in relationship between heterogeneity and the size of minority group."<sup>22</sup>

Lastly, I will state some expressions of the contrast between two models related to the intermarriage rather than the theories of the two models themselves. In summary, Hwang, Saenz, and Aguirre identify the contrast as follows:

The assimilationist and structural perspectives represent two complementary approaches to studying intermarriage. The former attempts to explain intermarriage in terms of the cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of individual minority members, and the latter explains it in terms of the characteristics of the community within which intermarriages are presumed to take place. The assimilationist perspective focuses on factors that affect preferences, whereas the structural approach informs us of the circumstances under which in-group preferences give way to structural necessity.... Gordon's assimilation theory focuses on explaining individual variations in marital choice using survey data, but Blau and his followers concentrate on explaining variations in intermarriage rates at the community level using aggregate census data.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Peter M. Blau, Terry C. Blum, and Joseph E. Schwartz, "Heterogeneity and Intermarriage," American Sociological Review 47, no. 1 (1982) : 38.

<sup>22</sup> Kevin M. Fitzpatrick and Sean-Shong Hwang, "The Effects of Community Structure on Opportunity for Interracial Contact: Extending Blau's Macrostructure Theory," Sociological Quarterly 33, no. 1 (1992) : 23.

<sup>23</sup> Hwang et al., "Structural and Assimilationist Explanations of Asian American Intermarriage," 761.

### **Theoretical Basis for Intermarriage Therapy: Eco-systemic Approach**

It is clear that marital therapy with intermarried couples requires an organized, culturally sensitive theoretical framework. Such a conceptual framework should take into account the intermarried couple's reality. They're individual culture, biculturalism, ethnicity status, language, social class, original family structure and help-seeking patterns. This chapter will discuss the ecosystemic approach as a theoretical basis for the intermarriage therapy.

The ecosystem approach maintains that imbalance and conflict may arise from any focus in the transactional field.<sup>24</sup> According to Ho, Urie Bronfenbrenner originally developed an ecological model in 1977 utilizing four factors affecting human development and interaction: individual, family, culture, and environment.<sup>25</sup> Although the couple or interpersonal relationship is the primary concern of marital therapy, problem-solving and enhancement of the marital relationship cannot occur without clear analysis of the four ecological factors. The level of emphasis upon each of these factors, in turn, depends on the specific nature of the couple's problem. In summary, Ho identifies the important points of these four levels as follows:

First, at the individual level, the focus is on the biopsychological endowment each person possesses, including their personality strengths, level of psychological development, cognition, perception, problem-solving skills, emotional temperament, habit formation, and communication and language skills.

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<sup>24</sup> Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy, 36.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Second, the family level focuses on family life style, family organization, sex role structure, division of labor, affective cycle, tradition, rituals, life cycle expectations and adjustment,, and management of internal or external stress. The nature and quality of the spousal relationship and the depth of connectedness to children and extended family also are areas of concern in the analysis and enhancement of a couple relationships.

Third, at the cultural level, the focus should be on understanding the value systems, belief systems, the societal norms of the host culture, and, in the case of ethnic minorities, the original culture. Cultural conflicts can also result in marital conflicts and mental-emotional impairment.

Fourth, at the environment level, the focus should be on understanding the economic and social structure of American society that oppresses individuals in the minority groups. Negative societal stereotypes, discrimination, and nonacceptance of the intermarried are other important factors that can affect an intermarried couple's relationship.<sup>26</sup>

In the treatment of the Mala family, I will focus on Jin-suk as an individual: her personality formation, emotional temperament, and communication skills with her husband, and at the family level: family life style, affection style, and management of external stress. On the cultural level I'll focus on Jin-suk's misunderstanding of the value system and societal norms of the Thai family that Sak Mala has, and on the environment level by the economic crisis of unemployment.

In the Ito Family, I will treat the individual level focused on Jin-suk's basic

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

cognition or perception of the parent-child relationship after divorce, her emotional temperament, and problem-solving skills. The family level focuses on the family life style and family organization. The cultural level focus on the difference in the value system of the traditional Japanese and Korean families.

In the Jackson Family, I will treat the individual level focus on Mi-suk's personal and psychological development from her childhood and emotional temperament. At the family level my special concern is focused on Mi-suk's basic cognition of the divorced family and an examination of the parent-child relationships after divorce, especially the sibling relationship between children by the former wife and children by the present wife.

In the Santiago Family, I will treat the individual level focus on Young-suk's personal psychological development, emotional temperament and habit formation. At the family level such as both Nat and Young-suk's unique family life style before marriage, management of internal and external stress between son and mother-in-law. And I will focus on the cultural level on two Korean American women's perspective about the value system and societal norms of the Filipino family.

For the treatment of the four families above, I stated here the ecological perspective factors that the four levels have; however, basically, I will use the theoretical framework of family therapy notions in Marry Bowen's theory of the differentiation of self related the emotional family system and the integrative problem-focused, short-term Brief therapy with an ecosystemic approach.

Lastly I will refer to the therapeutic principles that are particularly relevant to therapy that uses the "ecosystem framework with the intermarried." Ho introduced four of these therapeutic principles as follows below:

First, individual or couple relationship problems or difficulties are seldom conceived as an illness. Problems or difficulties are understood as a lack in the environment (as in the case of newly immigrated military wives), as dysfunctional transactions between systems (social services organization and mental health care delivery systems), as adaptive strategies (cultural shock and conflict).

Second, the principle of equifinality allows and encourages the therapist to apply a number of different interventions that produce similar effects or outcomes. Such flexibility and creativity in seeking alternative routes to change provide the therapist the option to relate interventive strategies to existing couple therapy theories, or to apply innovative strategies of change based on the client's unique cultural background and life space.

Third, therapeutic strategies make use of the life experiences and natural systems of the client or couple. Emphasis on the client's life space and family as a natural helping system places the therapist in 'a role as cultural broker' instead of intruder or manipulator.

Finally, the ecological principle that a change in one part of the system impacts on all other parts of the system allows the therapist flexibility to intervene within a marital situation without involving both spouses in the change process. Thus working with one marital partner may well bring about significant change in the couple's relationship when the couple's interactions are rigidified by traditional role structure.<sup>27</sup>

To assist intermarried couples with problem solving, it is insufficient just to know the reality of intermarriage. It is also necessary to know the relation between ethnic identification and family therapy.

### **Ethnicity and Intermarriage**

#### **Ethnicity and Family Therapy: Overview**

The term of ethnicity is different from that of race. As Noel Ignatiev puts it: "No biologist has ever been able to provide a satisfactory definition of 'race'—that is, a definition that includes all members of given race and excludes all others."<sup>28</sup> Rather, race is an issue of political oppression, not a cultural or genetic matter; ethnicity refers to a

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 37-38.

<sup>28</sup> Noel Ignatiev, How the Irish became White (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1, cited in Ethnicity and Family Therapy, eds. McGoldrick et al., 14.

common ancestry through which individuals have evolved shared values and customs.

That is, “ethnicity is deeply tied to the family, through which it is transmitted.”<sup>29</sup> I agree the statement that “every family’s background is multicultural, and all marriages are to a degree cultural intermarriages. No two families share exactly the same cultural roots.”<sup>30</sup>

“Ethnicity,” McGoldrick and Giordano continually expressed, “is a powerful influence in determining identity.... We may ignore our ethnicity or deny it by changing our names and rejecting our families and social backgrounds, but we do so to the detriment of our well being.... The subject of ethnicity evokes deep feelings, and discussion frequently becomes polarized or judgmental.”<sup>31</sup> Therefore, understanding the various strands of a family’s cultural heritage is essential to understanding its member’s life and the development of the particular individual as well.

In the relation between ethnicity and family therapy, the therapist’s role is important. It may be “that of a cultural broker, helping family members to recognize their own ethnic values and to resolve the conflicts that evolve out of different perceptions and experiences.”<sup>32</sup> “Helping a person achieve a stronger sense of self may require resolving cultural conflicts within the family.”<sup>33</sup> Also “helping families sort out the relationships in their own families of origin means that differentiation requires coming to terms with

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<sup>29</sup> McGoldrick and Giordano, 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

one's own ethnic identity.”<sup>34</sup> That is, ethnicity remains a major form of group identification and a major determinant of our family patterns and systems. In other words, therapist can not understand well the meaning of client's behavior without knowing something of a client's value orientation.

I will take an example of physical punishment of children by a parent, commonly used by many groups including Korean families. The dominant groups in the United States, until recently, perceived physical punishment as idiosyncratic pathological behavior. This does not justify child beatings. The therapist must consider the cultural context in which a behavior evolves, even as we try to reshape it when it does not reflect humanitarian or equitable values. The point is that “therapists, especially those whose dominant groups that tend to take their own values as the norm, must be extremely cautious in judging the meaning of behavior they observe.”<sup>35</sup>

“Studying ethnicity helps one appreciate differences in groups' attitudes toward many core values in the United States.”<sup>36</sup> In conclusion, “ethnicity is a social reality that will require the therapist to be more culturally competent as we enter the twenty-first century.... It becomes clear that we need to reexamine our therapy approaches in a larger multicultural context.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Asian American Families**

Asian American represents the fastest growing ethnic community in the United

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 25.



States today. The population has increased from less than 1 million in 1960 to over 7 million by 1990. According to the Asian American Health Forum (1990), Asian American belongs to the term Asian Pacific Americans, which applies to 43 ethnic groups, including 28 Asian groups and 15 Pacific Islander groups. Some Asian American groups are Chinese (23%), Filipino (19%), Japanese (12%), Korean (11%), and Thai (less than 2%). About 70% of the total Asian population reside in five states: California (35%), Hawaii (16%), New York (9%), Illinois (5%), and Texas (4%). The city with the highest concentrations of Asian Americans is Honolulu.<sup>38</sup> Also, according to Table 1, Asian (or Pacific Islander) increased from 583,252 (1980) to 685,236 (1990), an increase of 17.5 percent.<sup>39</sup>

As Man Keung Ho noted, a major dimension of cultural variation is individualism-collectivism.<sup>40</sup> "Individualism is characterized by the subordination of a group's goal to a person's own goal. It is a cultural pattern found in most northern and western regions of Europe and in North America. While, collectivism is characterized by individuals subordinating their personal goals to the goals of designated collectives. It is a cultural pattern commonly found in Asia, Africa, South America, and the Pacific."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Evelyn Lee, "Asian American Families: An Overview," in Ethnicity and Family Therapy, eds. McGoldrick et al., 228.

<sup>39</sup> U. S. Bureau of the Census, The State of Hawaii Data Book (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 44.

<sup>40</sup> Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy, 24.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

**Race by Hawaii States: 1980 and 1990 (Table 1)**

Race or Hispanic Origin	1980 (#1)	1990	1980 (%)	1990 (%)	% Change
All races	964,691	1,108,229	100.0	100.0	14.9
White	318,770	369,616	33.0	33.4	16.0
Black	17,364	27,195	1.8	2.5	56.6
American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	2,768	5,099	0.3	0.5	84.2
Asian or Pacific Islander	583,252	685,236	60.5	61.8	17.5
Chinese	56,285	68,804	5.8	6.2	22.2
Filipino	133,940	168,682	13.9	15.2	25.9
Japanese	239,748	247,486	24.9	22.3	3.2
Korean	17,962	24,454	1.9	2.2	36.1
Vietnamese	3,463	5,468	0.4	0.5	57.9
Hawaiian	115,500	138,742	12.0	12.5	20.1
Samoan	14,073	15,034	1.5	1.4	6.8
Other Asian or Pacific (#2)	2,281	16,566	0.2	1.5	726.3
Other race	42,537	21,083	4.4	1.9	-16.0
Hispanic Origin (#3)	71,263	81,390	7.4	7.3	14.2

(#1) 1980 figure limited to Asian Indians and Guamanians.

(#2) The Asian or Pacific Islander category includes only groups listed separately in the race question. Write in responses for groups such as Thai, Laotian, and Tongan were not included in 100 percent totals for the Asian or Pacific Islands population and were instead included with the "other race" group.

(#3) Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race. The 1990 total included 38,832 Asian and Pacific Islanders.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 *Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, Hawaii*, PC80-1-B13 (July 1982), tables 15 and 16; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 *Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, Hawaii*, 1990 CP-1-13 (June 1992), table 3.

The family relationships in the common traditional characteristics of Asian families, according to Evelyn Lee, are briefly summarized as follows:

First, In the husband-wife relationship, the dominant relationship in the traditional Asian families is more likely to be placed on the parent-child dyad, rather than the husband-wife dyad. The husband assumes the role of leadership and authority, and is the provider and protector of the family. The wife assumes the role of homemaker and childbearer.

Second, In the parent-child relationship, to provide nutrients and support is traditionally the role of a mother. The father's role in the parent-child relationship is discipline. The father and mother's functions tend to be complementary, rather than symmetrical. The strongest emotional attachment for a woman is sometimes not her husband, but her children, especially her sons. Most parents demand filial piety, respect, and obedience from their children.

Third, In the sibling relationships, many Asian parents usually delegate child-care functions to older siblings, especially the eldest daughter. Cooperation and sharing among siblings are expected. The emotional ties among siblings are

specially strong for those who survived war and escapes. Due to historical practices of sexism, sons are favored. Sibling rivalry is not uncommon.<sup>42</sup>

Also, the family structural relationships in Asian American, according to Ho, are briefly summarized as follows: “(1) more patriarchal in the husband-wife relationship (also may be included mate selection); (2) more hierarchical in parent-child relationship (American Indian parent-child relationships are less pressured and more egalitarian than that of other ethnic groups in both minority families and White American families); (3) more hierarchical by age and sex in siblings relationships; and (4) more cohesive and extensive in in-law relationship related to the extended family as a kinship tie.”<sup>43</sup>

Asian American families in transition, generally speaking, can be divided into five major types: traditional families, cultural conflict families, bicultural families, Americanized families, and interracial families.<sup>44</sup> Among them, interracial Asian American families are increasing rapidly, currently constituting about 10-15% of marriage. Japanese Americans lead in this trend, with more than half marrying outside their group, followed by Filipino, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean Americans.<sup>45</sup> Some interracial families are able to integrate both cultures with a high degree of success. However, others often experience conflicts in values, religious beliefs, communication style, childrearing, in-law problems, and so on.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Evelyn Lee, 231.

<sup>43</sup> Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy, 28-30.

<sup>44</sup> Evelyn Lee, 232-33.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

Now I will examine the characteristics of three ethnic families related to these cases among Asian families: Thai, Japanese, and Filipino families.

**Thai Family.** Little has been published about Thai families, however the article written by Methinin Pinyuchon, an assistant professor of guidance and educational psychology at Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok, Thailand, and by Lizbeth Gray, an assistant professor of counselor education at Oregon State University, describes six cultural influences that effect Thai families. They are religious beliefs, rural and urban considerations, family relationships, societal values, masculine and feminine roles, and sexuality.<sup>47</sup> I am interested in all six cultural influences, but I will focus only on family relationships, societal values, and sexuality, thinking about the problems in the Mala Family that I presented already in Chapter 2.

First, according to Pinyuchon and Gray, “the best way to get a clear view of Thai family relationships is perhaps to examine how family members interact with each other.”<sup>48</sup> For example, when the previously married offspring is not prepared to become financially independent, the marriage of the next sibling may be postponed. This pattern applies to a subsequent sibling as well. Another point of family relationships is that “through family decision-making experiences, children are taught to respectfully share their opinions. Although sharing opinions is acceptable, Thai people still find it difficult to express themselves openly, particularly when their ideas are challenged with disagreement, because social harmony is highly emphasized among Thais.... Thus the

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<sup>47</sup> Methinin Pinyuchon and Lizbeth A. Gray, “Understanding Thai Families: A Cultural Context for Therapists Using a Structural Approach,” Contemporary Family Therapy 19, no. 2 (1997) : 209-28.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 211.

family is the place where children learn, at a very young age, to show appropriate respect to parents, siblings, relatives, teacher, monks, and others.”<sup>49</sup>

Second, Thai people have a proverb representing the value of keeping family conflicts and problems within the family: “*Fai nai yaa ok, Fai nok yaa mum khao.*”<sup>50</sup> This belief seems to be similar to those of other Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea in the sense that “Thai people are afraid to bring dishonor or loss of face to the family.” Also, Thai people think that it is a shameful thing to bring a family problem to outsiders such as therapists by expressing openly their feelings and thoughts to others.<sup>51</sup> Pinyuchon and Gray pointed out, “one reason to hide their feelings and thoughts is to prevent trouble and to avoid challenge or confrontations. Withdrawal rather than aggressive encounters is preferred.... To be polite in the Thai family and society, certain mannerisms are required such as quiet speech, a pleasant smile, gracefulness, and utmost consideration for comfort.”<sup>52</sup>

Third, according to Pinyuchon and Gray, “in Thai society, most people avoid talking about sexuality because they feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or shy.... Parents typically expect that females will not experience sexual relationships until after marriage. In contrast, it is acceptable for young Thai males to have sexual experiences. In Thailand, it has been long believed that love comes after marriage.”<sup>53</sup> Thus, “these distinct attitudes

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 215.

of sexual and social freedom for single men and women are also seen in marital relationships. When sexual problems occur, Thai males tend to fulfill their needs by finding other activities, spending more time with peers, having sex with prostitutes, or by having extra-marital affairs. Although culturally permitted, the practice of males having extramarital relationships is often a devastating experience for the women and children in a family.”<sup>54</sup>

Lastly, it is important to conceive that a Thai husband, following marriage, still closely associate with his peers, who are greatly influenced by their peer group, rather than his wife and family. They lose faces if their peers believe that they are afraid of their wives. Therefore, to show that he is not controlled by his wife or that he does not care too much for his wife, a Thai male may spend a great deal of social time with friends or colleagues.<sup>55</sup>

**Japanese Family.** There are some statistics about the Japanese in the United States. They were the third largest Asian American ethnic group and made up 12.3% of the Asians in the United States; however, their population (848,000) in 1990 was close to that of Asian Indians (815,000) and to Koreans (799,000).<sup>56</sup> “Japanese Americans had the lowest level of foreign-born among its population in 1990 (32,4%), because they have a relatively low immigration rate.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Banks, 456.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

The immigration experience of Japanese Americans can be understood by the context of conditions in Japan during the Meiji Era (1868-1912), the Immigration Period (1890-1924), the Prewar Period (1924-1941), the Wartime Evacuation (1941-1945), and the Postwar Period (1945-the Present),<sup>58</sup> during which Ben Ito moved to the United States.

Japanese American families consist of five patterns: the *issei*, the *nisei*, *Sansei*, *Yonsei*, and *Gosei*.<sup>59</sup> Matsui mentioned these five generations as follows: "The *issei* were the first generation of immigrants. The laws restricting immigration created a window of opportunity to come to the United States between 1905 and 1924. The *nisei* were the second generation and the first generation born in the United States. Most *nisei* were born between 1915 and 1935. *Sansei* are the third generation. Most *sansei* were born between 1945 and 1965. *Yonsei* refers to the fourth generation. It will be interesting to see whether this counting of generations will continue with acculturation. *Gosei* refers to the fifth generation."<sup>60</sup>

In reviewing these five Japanese family generation patterns, Ben Ito belongs to *sansei*, third generation. "*Sansei* and *yonsei* were more physically demonstrative, egalitarian in their marriages, and included more American cultural norms. They still may retain some traditional Japanese attitudes and values."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Wesley T. Matsui, "Japanese Families," in *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, eds. McGoldrick et al., 268-72.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>60</sup> Matsui, 272.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

According to Kitano, “one-third of all Japanese American marry non-Japanese, whereas in Hawaii, where the Japanese make up a larger percentage of the total population, one-half of all Japanese Americans marry non-Japanese.”<sup>62</sup> Tinker also finds that “the *sansei* rate of intermarriage is even greater, and views this pattern of interracial marriage as evidence of thorough assimilation of the Japanese American into the dominant culture.”<sup>63</sup> For example, “in 1989, the out-marriage rate for Japanese Americans living in Los Angeles County was 51.9%. It was 58.3 % for women and 41.7% for men. Their high rate of out-marriage with other groups indicates the fact that Japanese Americans are highly culturally assimilated.”<sup>64</sup>

Now, I will examine the topic of “parenting,” related to the parent-child relationships in the Japanese family, especially for the Ito family. The difference in emphasis on the dimension of differentiation of self between the West and the Japanese is apparent in divergent parenting styles.<sup>65</sup> This difference is well described in the paragraph of Reischauer:

Japanese infants and small children are treated quite permissively, are in almost constant contact with their mothers, and are practically never left alone.... Japanese children are nursed for a relatively long period, are fed more at will, are constantly fondled by their mothers, are still often carried around on the back when mothers go out ... and often sleep with their parents until quite large. Even after that, Japanese tend to sleep in groups rather than singly in individual rooms.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Kitano, 25.

<sup>63</sup> John N. Tinker, “Intermarriage and Assimilation in a Plural Society: Japanese Americans in the United States,” Marriage and Family Review 5, no. 1 (1982) : 61, cited in Matsui, 274.

<sup>64</sup> Banks, 456.

<sup>65</sup> Matsui, 275.

<sup>66</sup> Edwin O. Reischauer, The Japanese Today: Change and Conformity (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1988), 144, cited in Matsui, 275.



The result is increased dependency in relations with to the Japanese mother is an attitude called *amae* (the cognate is 'sweet'), which means "to look to others for affection."<sup>67</sup> "Implicit in the intense mother-child relationship as the psychological precursor to *amae* is the importance of the mother-child relationship."<sup>68</sup>

Matsui suggests the proper model applicable to Japanese American families is "structural family therapy," which has been offered as a treatment of choice for Chinese families and Vietnamese Chinese families.<sup>69</sup> Matsui concluded, "the success of the Japanese in United States society is indisputable, however, their future is uncertain. Their success is probably a result largely of traditional Japanese values, attitudes, and beliefs. With a high out-marriage rate and a relatively low rate of immigration, cultural and structural assimilation into the main stream society may erode the most important values that have taken the Japanese down the road to success."<sup>70</sup>

**Filipino Family.** Filipino immigration to the United States has been three waves.

In summary, Emilio Rita identifies as follows:

The first wave was composed of farm workers in the 1920s and 1930s, known as 'old- timers,' who found themselves the objects of racial discrimination, social segregation, economic exploitation, and even violence. The second wave were World War II veterans and their families. This group has had difficulty adjusting to the American way of life, a problem that often leads to social isolation and alienation. The third wave were professionals who, even now, have difficulty keeping up with the image assigned to them as members of the model minority.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Matsui, 275.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 276-77.

<sup>70</sup> Banks, 458.

<sup>71</sup> Emilio Santa Rita, "Filipino Families," in Ethnicity and Family Therapy, eds. McGoldrick et al., 324-25.

According to Rita, “the conflict among different generations of Filipino Americans is characterized by the clashes between traditional and Westernized cultural beliefs, values, and behaviors, and differences in communication styles.”<sup>72</sup> She explains ten points this conflict between some traditional Filipino values and the egalitarian ideals and individualism of the American society.<sup>73</sup> Among them I will quote only the three points related to the in-law relationship in the *Santiago* family case: “First, the strict adherence to gender-role stereotypes and patriarchal family structure goes against the egalitarian norms in the American family. Second, The primacy of smooth interpersonal relationship (SIR) conflicts with American ideal of openness and frankness. And, third, The practice of *delecadeza*, or nonconfrontational communication is ineffectual in the United States, where directness is appreciated and competitiveness is encouraged.”<sup>74</sup>

Nat Santiago, as I mentioned it already in Chapter 2, had a solid self from childhood by his father and stepmother. He also couldn’t freely confront his father or his stepmother because of the family mood by his father’s military-styled strictness. And even if his wife, Young-suk, and his mother-in-law, Jay, were Korean women, because Young-suk immigrated to the United States when she was at 10 years old with her mother, Young-suk had built culture and values than Korean culture and values. Nat was U.S. military and is an engineer now, however, his personality had been formed style of withdrawal or vengeance rather than directness and openness. These factors might have affected Nat’s personality and life style.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 325.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 325-26.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 325.

Now, I will present some significant statistical numbers about Filipino Americans today to understand them better. "The number of Filipinos entering the United States increased from 3,130 in 1965 to 61,000 in 1992. The Filipino population in the United States increased 80% in the decade between 1980 and 1990. In 1990, there was about 1,407,000 Filipino living in the United States. Of these, 52% lived in California and 12% lived in Hawaii."<sup>75</sup> Also, "most Filipinos who came to the United States in the 1920s were unskilled laborers. The significant number of professionally trained Filipinos who have immigrated to the United States since the Immigration Act of 1965 has changed the social and demographic characteristics of the Filipino Americans but also significantly increased the number of Filipino immigrants to the United States."<sup>76</sup>

1990 U. S. Censuses indicate that the group characteristics of Filipino Americans, based on several criteria related to education, income, and job status, do not differ significantly from the Japanese, Chinese, and other groups in the United States. "In 1990, the median family income for Filipino was \$46,698. Compared to \$35,225 for all persons in the United States. The percentage of Filipino high school graduates, twenty-five years or older, was 82%, compared to 75% for all persons in the United States."<sup>77</sup>

Lastly, I will shortly refer to family therapy with Filipino Americans. According to Rita, "family therapy is the treatment of choice for Filipino families. Mental illness is perceived as social in nature, and Filipino seek a cure in 'sociotherapy,' that is, the

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<sup>75</sup> Banks, 465.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 466.

restoration of harmonious relationship and smooth functioning in the family.”<sup>78</sup> In her article’s conclusion, Rita said, “major obstacles to the mental health of Filipino Americans stem from their sense of vulnerability over their perceived and acutely subordinate status in this society, reminiscent of their colonial history.... This discovery should help the Filipino family gain self-respect.”<sup>79</sup>

### **Caucasian American Family**

Whites are usually called Caucasian, especially in Hawaii, “Haulee,” however, ethnically, European American. Joe Giordano and Monica McGoldrick use “White ethnic” interchangeably with “European American” to refer to all non-Hispanic White families of European heritage.<sup>80</sup>

Giordano and McGoldrick indicated, with the result of the 1990 U.S. Census, “Whites made up 80% of the U.S population of 250 million. There are 53 categories of European Americans. Of which the largest are German American (58 million), those of English ancestry (British, English, Welsh, and Scottish; 41 million), and Irish Americans (39 million); the smallest are Cypriot Americans (5,000). Yet these groups are barely mentioned in most discussions of cultural diversity.”<sup>81</sup>

According to Giordano and McGoldrick, “most families from European American groups have been in the United States for three generations or more, so that the

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<sup>78</sup> Rita, 327-28.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 329.

<sup>80</sup> Joe Giordano and Monica McGoldrick, “European Families: An Overview,” in Ethnicity and Family Therapy, eds. McGoldrick et al., 427 .

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

immigration generations' struggles against discrimination and for a satisfactory education, occupation, and residence have largely faded. An increasing number of White ethnic also marry outside of their own group, think of themselves simply as "Americans," and often are unaware of and uninterested in their mixed European heritage."<sup>82</sup>

In addition, there are a lot of facts and information about "European Families," for example, "from the melting pot to the new pluralism," "the issue of race," "religion," "class," "the persistence of ethnicity," and "intermarriage."<sup>83</sup> However, here I will refer to only intermarriage.

Of intermarriage, Giodano and McGoldrick explain that "intermarriage is occurring at triple the rate of the early 1970s. More than 50% of Americans are marrying out of their ethnic groups: 33 million American adults live in households where at least one another adult has a different religious identity."<sup>84</sup> Also, they write, "marriages between Blacks and Whites have tripled in the last 30 years. Also the number of children living in families in which one parent is White and the other is Black, Asian, or Native American has tripled from less than 400,000 in 1970 to 1.5 million in 1990, which do not include single or divorced families. With this trend increasing, therapists will be presented with new challenges in dealing with issues of identity, parenting, and family dynamics."<sup>85</sup> And they believe that "dealing with these cultural differences is often the key to opening the family systems. Although different cultural values may be deeply held

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 431-39.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 438.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 438-39.

and at the core of serious conflicts between spouses and or among family members, they may also provide a convenient way of rationalizing and displacing anger arising from other family problems.”<sup>86</sup>

### **Military Family: Asian-Wife Intermarriage in the U.S. Military**

To effectively treat these cases presented, I need to understand the characteristics, problems, and treatments of the military family, especially of Asian-wife intermarriage in the U.S. Military. Of the four cases three husbands were related to military: *Ronald Jackson*, *Nat Santiago*, and retired from the military *Sak Mala*.

Since World War II, nearly a quarter of a million marriages have been contracted between Asian women and U.S. servicemen overseas.<sup>87</sup> These women have primarily come from countries where there is or has been a strong U.S. military presence: Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand.<sup>88</sup>

Military families also are not generally very different from non-military families. They are “not only subject to the same stresses and problems that occur in marriage and families in general population, but also have their own difficulties that pose unique threats to their stability.”<sup>89</sup> There are certain characteristics common to all military marriages, and yet “if the spouses do not cope with these characteristics adequately, they

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 439

<sup>87</sup> Bok-Lim C. Kim, “Asian Wives of U. S. Servicemen: Women in Shadows,” *Amerasia* 4, no. 1 (1997) : 91.

<sup>88</sup> Gary L. Bowen and H. Carl Henley, “Asian-Wife Marriage in the U. S. Military: A Comparative Analysis with White- and Black- Wife Marriage,” *Family Perspective* 21, no. 1 (1987) : 23.

<sup>89</sup> Doyle, 29.

become problematic to the point of causing marital breakdown.”<sup>90</sup> In Military families, the common characteristics become problems. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, they are the economic circumstance, the extremely high rate of mobility, and the absence from the home for periods of time, other absence related problems such as the problem of the re-entry of the absent spouse into the family unit, and the military career itself.<sup>91</sup>

In other words, it is likely that family members in the military face the same daily problems as civilian family members. Their problems are compounded with hardships inherent to the military, that is: “frequent moves, hectic and varying job schedules, and extended separations, all within the context of a seemingly insensitive rule-bound social system.”<sup>92</sup> “Potentially high-risk areas for military couples have been identified as alcohol abuse,”<sup>93</sup> “lack of emotional expression among military husbands,”<sup>94</sup> and “spouse abuse.”<sup>95</sup>

A recent empirical study of Military intermarried family, especially Asian-wife intermarried family, not just Military family, by Bowen and Henley confirms that “Asian

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>92</sup> Alex R. Rodriguez, “Special Treatment Needs of Children of Military Families,” in The Military Family, eds. Florence W. Kaslow and Richard I. Ridenour (New York: Guilford Press, 1984), cited in Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy, 104.

<sup>93</sup> Theodore G. Williams, “Substance Misuse and Alcoholism in the Military Family,” in The Military Family, eds. Florence W. Kaslow and Richard I. Ridenour (New York: Guilford Press, 1984), cited in Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy, 104.

<sup>94</sup> David V. Keith and Carl Whitaker, “C’est La Guerre: Military Families and Family Therapy,” in The Military Family, eds. Florence W. Kaslow and Richard I. Ridenour (New York: Guilford Press, 1984), cited in Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy, 104.

<sup>95</sup> Mario R. Schwabe and Florence W. Kaslow, “Violence in the Military Family,” in The Military Family, eds. Florence W. Kaslow and Richard I. Ridenour (New York: Guilford Press, 1984), cited in Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy, 104.

wives in the military experience greater disharmony in their nuclear or extended family relationships than other couples with military husbands and civilian wives.”<sup>96</sup> The major hypothesis and the result from the investigation by Bowen and Henley was that “the racial/ethnic group identity of the wife would be related to the level of family functioning experienced by husbands and wives in their marital, parent-child, and extended family relationship.”<sup>97</sup> It was predicted that “husband and wives in Asian-wife marriages would have significantly lower family functioning than husbands and wives in marriages with either white or black wives.”<sup>98</sup>

The differences between the Asian family patterns and American family patterns are presented well in the statement as follows:

The Asian emphasis on the extended family system, the primacy of the mother-child relationship, family unit and interdependence, filial piety, self-restraint, nonverbal communication, conflict avoidance, and hyperconsciousness about opinions of others contrasts greatly with American patterns toward the nuclear family system, the primacy of the husband-wife relationship, independence and individualism, personal achievement and aggressiveness, confrontationalness, directness, and rejection of authority and external conformity.<sup>99</sup>

These basic cultural differences may create an undercurrent of tension between husbands and wives in marriage and critically challenge the ability of Asian women to successfully interface with Western culture and family lifestyles.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Bowen and Henley, 25.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 26, 34.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*



These problems occur from the beginning of immigration to the United States from the Asian-wives' native countries. For example, as I found in the *Sak Mala* family, when the Korean wife, *Jin-suk*, lived in Korea with her military husband, she could continue to live in her familiar environment. She would speak her language, would interact with her family (*Jin-suk*'s mother opposed her intermarriage) and friends who may also be intermarried, and would eat her native Korean food. Likewise, the husband, *Sak Mala*, was able to continue to work in the same setting, more likely on the military base, although he might then spend more time with his wife. Also a legal marriage gave them the sense of security and stability. Military benefits for dependents made them feel affluent as such benefits stretch much further in the wife's country where living was less costly.<sup>101</sup>

This marriage compatibility changes drastically when the husband takes his Asian wife to the United States. Some of the difficulties, identified through various studies,<sup>102</sup> are: (1) the unavailability of accurate data on their geographic concentration; (2) the experience of relatively infrequent and mild strain within the marital relationship; (3) the feeling of being inadequate and inferior to American women, describing themselves a subservient, less-educated, miserable, and with less freedom; (4) homesickness, especially during their first year of emigration from their home country; (5) the lack of English proficiency and thereby negative affect to their self-esteem; (6) the feeling of

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<sup>101</sup> Bok-Lim C. Kim, 97-98.

<sup>102</sup> Bok-Lim C. Kim quotes Murray A. Strauss, "Strain and Harmony in American-Japanese War-Bride Marriage," *Marriage and Family Living*, 16 (1954): 99-106; George A. Devos, *Personality Patterns and Problems of Adjustment in American-Japanese Intercultural Marriage* (Taiwan, 1973); and Dorothy W. Trebilcock, "The Individual, Social and Cultural Implications of the Cross-Cultural Marriage: Korean Wives and Their American Husbands in Michigan," M.A thesis, Michigan State University, 1973.

loneliness from rejection as the children grow older and are ashamed by their poor English; (7) the experience of physical abuse, suicide attempts and severe depression.<sup>103</sup>

All of the studies indicate “common areas of difficulties and stress that could contribute to marriage dissolution or family disorganization. In addition to strains on the marital relationship, Asian women undergo severe personal disorientation when adjustment cannot be facilitated.”<sup>104</sup> Bok-Lim Kim suggests five recommendations for facilitating the achievement of happy and fulfilling family lives for Asian wives and their families in the United States.<sup>105</sup> These five recommendations are:

(1) systematic data related to the location and demographic characteristics of intermarried couples must be collected and made available to them. (2) A comprehensive multi-lingual resource book should be developed and distributed to every intermarried couple. (3) Bilingual training and orientation classes should be made available to both husband and wife prior and subsequent to settlement in the United States. (4) A nationwide hotline system is solely needed to provide crisis intervention, referral, and follow-up services to widely scattered and frequently isolated Asian wives. And, (5) support must be given to the National Committee Concerned with Asian Wives of U.S. Servicemen in their task to locate resources.<sup>106</sup>

Also, in an attempt to prevent failure and restore Asian wife marriage harmony in the military, David Lee proposed three stages of psychological development for these Asian wives: the phases of cultural “transition,” “accommodation,” and “transculturation.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Bok-Lim C. Kim, 103-09.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 112-13

<sup>107</sup> David Lee, “Asian-Born Spouses: Stress and Coping Patterns,” *Military Family* 2 (1982): 3-5, cited in Ho, *Intermarried Couples in Therapy*, 104.

In summary, David Lee indicates the three stages of psychological development for these Asian wives during different cultural phases as follows:

First, during the early adjustment of the transitional phase, the degree of the Asian spouses' American cultural orientation, their personality, and their husband's supportiveness will determine the effect of cultural and environmental change on the Asian couple. For example, innovative culturally sensitive programs, such as the Bride's school are excellent resources that aim to assist Asian wives and their American servicemen fiancées.

Second, during this second phase of accommodation, psychological alienation becomes more poignant and destructive. They must cope with the cruel external realities of prejudice, limited job opportunities, cultural conflict, and cultural marginality. For example, many Asian wives tend to display a dual personality and a double consciousness. Their divided loyalty between their own and their husband's cultures indicated ambivalence in their attitudes and sentiments. Psychological stress includes value conflicts, competition, jealousy, and financial burden. A therapist during this accommodation phase needs to assist the Asian spouses in utilizing existing mental health and community resources as well as programs specialized in meeting their needs.

Third, the final transculturation phase requires that Asian spouses and their husbands overcome marital tasks as well as normal developmental tasks associated with life-cycle progression. These tasks include effective couple and interfamilial communication, mutual sharing of personal and cultural strength, functional relationships with various kinship and friendship, and effective parenting of biethnic children. Marital therapy with transcultural married couples in the military requires additional knowledge, techniques, and skills.<sup>108</sup>

Until now, I discussed the basic theoretical understanding of intermarriage including the reality of intermarriage, ethnicity and intermarriage, and especially the characteristics of the Asian families such as Thai, Japanese, and Filipino families, as well as the general characteristics of the military family. Next, I will investigate the characteristics of the Korean family system for effective treatment of the cases.

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<sup>108</sup> David Lee, 3-5, cited in Ho, Intermarried Couples in Therapy, 104-06.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Investigation of the Korean Family System**

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the characteristics of the Korean family in order to effectively treat the four families in the four cases. To understand them, I will investigate as follows: (1) the characteristics of the traditional and contemporary Korean family system and their conflicts; (2) the characteristics of the Korean American family in the United States, with adjustments to differing American culture in roles, values, and living conditions; and (3) the characteristics of the Korean American women in intermarried family systems and the conflicts that can occurred in the intermarried families.

### **Background: Historical and Socio-cultural Perspective**

The exact origin of Korean racial stock is unknown; however, it is believed to be an offshoot of the Mongol family. In 2333 B.C., several groups of Mongols gathered and elected a king, called Tangun, to rule over Korea. He called the country Chosen, or “the Land of the Morning Calm.”<sup>1</sup> Recently, Connie K. Kang, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* specializing in Asian-American affairs, called Korea “the Land of Morning Calm,” in her book of a story of the Korean Diaspora, saying, “I am more American than Korean in my mind, but I am more Korean than American in my soul.”<sup>2</sup>

Historically, the prevalence of Confucianism grew significantly from the late fourteenth century in Ming dynasty in China and Yi dynasty in Korea, and later from

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<sup>1</sup> Helen L. Givens, The Korean Community in Los Angeles (San Francisco: R & E Research Associates, 1974), 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Connie K. Kang, Home was the Land of Morning Calm: A Sage of a Korean American Family (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1995), cover page.

seventeenth century in Tokugawa dynasty in Japan, a period of history that can be justly called the “Age of Confucianism.”<sup>3</sup> The founder of the Ming dynasty issued a rescript extolling the six virtues: filial piety, respect for elders, cordial relations between neighbors, education for sons and grandsons, diligence and frugality, law and order; after the Emperor Guangxu expanded the number of virtues to sixteen.<sup>4</sup> However, the Yi dynasty apparently outformed those of contemporary China. For example, the Korean Confucian scholars such as Yi T’oegye (1501-1570) and Yi Yulgok (1536-1584), developed a distinctive tradition of highly sophisticated epistemological inquiries into human knowledge and emotion, rarely examined the writings of contemporary colleagues the Ming dynasty.<sup>5</sup>

The prevalence of this general notion is reflected in the negative evaluation of the role of Confucianism in the history of Korea. On this negative point, Koh expressed that “in the postwar decades of East Asia, the drastic changes in political systems, social institutions and cultural orientation inflicted a fatal blow to the already decaying ideology of Confucianism.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, because of social progress and economic developments, the long ingrained Confucian ideology and values were discarded.

Also, according to Koh, “Confucian morality and values are basically status quo oriented and opposed to development, but the transformed Confucian values and

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<sup>3</sup> Byong-ik Koh, “Confucianism in Asia’s Modern Transformation,” Korea Journal 32, no. 4 (winter 1992) : 50.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 59.

attitudes helped to consolidate the national efforts for development.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, “Confucianism was a barrier to development in static societies; however, in rapidly changing societies, Confucian moralism, which emphasized the middle of the road, modesty, and greater concern for the community with less concern for self-interest, can constitute a force for social and personal restraint.”<sup>8</sup>

In recent years, Confucianism has been at “the center of an interesting and controversial debate concerning economic and political developments in East Asia.”<sup>9</sup> “Confucianism places a great deal of emphasis on the family, viewing all human relationships and institutions as patterned after or based upon the Confucian familism.”<sup>10</sup>

In order to understand “Confucian familism,” one has to understand first the Western conception of family, and yet, in the West, the distinction between private and public has been the starting point of “political theory.”<sup>11</sup> In this perspective, the Western concept of family is in the same realm as “the concepts of personal and private.”<sup>12</sup> However, “the distinction between the public and the private in Confucianism is not only ignored but is actively suppressed. Perhaps the most concise

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>9</sup> Chai-bong Hahm, “Confucian Tradition and Economic Reform in Korea,” Korea Focus: On Current Topics 5, no. 3 (May/June 1997) : 76.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 80. “Aristotle’s *Politics* explains the distinction between the *oikos* (household) and the *polis*. For the ancient Greeks, the *polis* was the public realm, the realm of politics. The household, on the other hand, was the private realm, the realm of necessity. The two realms were linked in that the citizens who participated in the *polis* as equals were those men who were the masters of their own households run by women, children, and slaves, which freed them from the basic necessities of life to engage in the most human of all activities, politics.... The public realm is still the realm of the political, where now the objective and rational rules and claims. This is the realm of Max Weber’s “functional tasks” and “impersonal rationalization.”

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 79.

and famous of all Confucian formulations that refuses to acknowledge the distinction between the private and the public is the opening passage of the Great Book, one of the Four Books of Neo-Confucianism.”<sup>13</sup>

“Confucian familism,” according to Hahm, “stands in sharp contrast to the strong individualism traditionally associated with capitalism and liberal democracy. Familism stands for the personalist principle, which ties the individual ever anew to his sib members and to the manner of the sib, hindered the development of the impersonal rationalization, essential to capitalist development.”<sup>14</sup> Also, “Confucian familism stands for traditionalism and authoritarianism, which hindered the development of attitudes tying individuals to functional tasks rather than to persons.”<sup>15</sup>

More importantly, it is not so much a matter of extending “personalist ethics” to the “public sphere” as applying the same principle. That is, Confucianism is “the effort to regard family not as the repository of the private but rather as the training ground for public spiritedness.”<sup>16</sup>

In summary, the ideology of Confucianism was transplanted into the Korean soil and had flourished and prospered, like the other major philosophies and religions of Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Confucianism has today virtually disappeared as an ideology of the political mainstream, and the Confucian tradition in Korea, deprived of its commitment to the state ideology, confined itself to the family ethics and rituals, and persisted, in subdued posture, well into the mid

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 82.

twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Traditional Confucian Family System**

The traditional Korean family system is based on the teachings of Confucius (551- 479 B.C.) who was “a practical as well as a philosopher in China.”<sup>18</sup>

Confucianism as a basis of the traditional Korean family system, began as a set of principles and rituals aimed at harmonizing human relationships, and has now become more “a guide to social behavior.”<sup>19</sup> Confucius constructed his social thought around five human relationships, three of which are related to the family: (1) father and son, (2) husband and wife, (3) ruler and subject, (4) elder and younger, and (5) friend and friend.<sup>20</sup> Each of these relationships was governed by sanctified norms and ethics; rebelliousness against the established patterns constituted a cardinal sin.<sup>21</sup>

This focal Confucian interest is “social harmony and its corollary social relationship.”<sup>22</sup> Confucius placed his ideas into a concrete set of social rules: the three cardinal principles and the five ethical relationships.<sup>23</sup> In the world of Confucianism, a hierarchy with a patriarchy is significant. Actually the hierarchy is based on

<sup>17</sup> Koh, 54.

<sup>18</sup> Don Chang Lee and Eun Ho Lee, “Korean Immigrant Families in America: Role and Value Conflicts,” Korea Observer 21, no. 1 (spring 1990) : 31.

<sup>19</sup> Young Whan Kihl, “The Legacy of Confucian Culture and South Korean Politics and Economics: An Interpretation,” Korea Journal 34, no. 3 (autumn 1994) : 50.

<sup>20</sup> Lee and Lee, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Illsoo Kim, New Urban Immigrants: The Korean Community in New York (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 298-99.

<sup>22</sup> Suk C. Chang, “The Self: A Nodal Issue in Culture and Psyche: An Eastern Perspective,” Korean Perspective 7, nos. 1-2 (summer/fall 1996) : 53.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. “The three cardinal principles” are the relationships between the ruler/ruled, the older/younger, and the male/female; “the five ethical relations” are the relationships between sovereign/subjects, father/son, husband/wife, older brother/younger brother, and those between friends.



“virtue.”<sup>24</sup> What then is virtue? This is the central question in Confucianism.

According to Chang, “for Confucius, virtues essentially a social-empirical rather than an individual abstract quality.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the individual members in the traditional Korean family are in the reciprocal relation with the major values of the Korean society and culture.

In traditional Korean society, the most important motivation for marriage was to continue the patrilineal family line and to obtain a daughter-in-law to serve the parents. The main purpose of marriage was to benefit the family, especially that of the husband. At the same time, marriage dissolution was primarily related to ancestors, parents, or members of the family, while the personal relationship between husband and wife was of secondary importance.<sup>26</sup>

Although Confucianism as a religion is no longer widely practiced in Korea today, Confucianism as a moral and ethical principle seems still widely subscribed to by the population of South Korea. The role of Confucianism in the historical background and transformation of Korea society has been actively debated and critically assessed by many.<sup>27</sup>

Tae Lyon Kim, a professor of Educational Psychology at Ewha Woman’s University, Korea, for example, informed us that the clarification of role expectation and role perception in parent-child relationships could help better to understand the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Siyon Rhee, “Separation and Divorce among Korean Immigrant Families,” in Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism, eds. Young I. Song and Ailee Moon (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 152.

<sup>27</sup> Kihl, 37-38.

Korean family in the changing society.<sup>28</sup> According to Kim, traditional parent-child relationships in Korea family has two aspects: parents' expectation toward children and children's expectation toward parents. The first expectation is as follows: Children, especially sons, as the mainstay of the family, took over the ancestor worship service. They were expected to maintain the tradition and honor of the family. This results in sons being preferred to daughters. The eldest son succeeded his father in primogeniture. In a word, the children's role was to respect and obey their parents, and support them in their old age.<sup>29</sup> Second expectation is that of a "strict father and affectionate mother" representing the traditional parents' role on the basis of Confucian morality.<sup>30</sup> The father, as head of the family, handles outside matters including the children's marriage and the sons' education; while mothers takes the responsibility in the childbearing and housework.<sup>31</sup>

It is true that the current parent-child relationship was changed differently in many aspects, however, I will refer one more point about the parent-child relationship in the traditional Korean family system focused on the Confucianism. The point is related to the problem or conflict between the traditional and the contemporary Korean family.

Consider the traditional parent-child relationship. This type of relationship would have a tendency to cause the self-esteem of daughters (women) in the traditional Korean family to be lower than that of the sons (men) from the childhood. Young-Ju

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<sup>28</sup> Tae Lyon Kim, "Korean Family in the Changing Society: Psychological Approach to Better Family Relationship," Korea Observer 28, no. 4 (winter 1997) : 631.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 632.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Chun, in her thesis, reported a result such as individuation would negatively relate to self-esteem for both male and female adolescents, that is, adolescents who were more individual, not involved with the families of origin tended to report lower self-esteem.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the drastic changes in society, the familial function of the parent-child relationship is still an important aspect. For example, according to Sang-yun Hyon, the Confucian cultural influence on Korean society has received more critical and somewhat balanced evaluation in terms of both positive and negative legacies.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Contemporary Korean Family System**

For the past few decades, there has been a rapid change in the socio-economic structure in Korea. The underlying family relationship in contemporary Korean society, but, is “still characterized by a tradition of male dominance, the husband leads and the wife follows.”<sup>34</sup> The traditional family relationship and a long history of discrimination against females in Korea remained relatively unchanged until World War II.

“The character of contemporary Koreans has evolved from the fluid class and status structure, Yi society as well as from Confucianism and Protestant Christianity. The heritage of Korean Confucianism reinforces the family-centered success ethic.”<sup>35</sup> Also, the central state bureaucracy, which derived its ideological support from Korean

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<sup>32</sup> Young-Ju Chun, and Shelley M. MacDermid, “Perceptions of Family Differentiation, Individuation, and Self-Esteem among Korean Adolescents,” Journal of Marriage and the Family 59, no. 2 (1997) : 460.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., citing Sang-yun Hyon, “Hanguk e issoso ui kongbiron (A reevaluation of Confucianism in Korea), Asea yon gu (A study of Asia) 9, no. 4 (1966) : 1-20.

<sup>34</sup> Rhee, 152.

<sup>35</sup> Ilsoo Kim, 303.

Confucianism, has indelibly marked the Korean character.<sup>36</sup> Recently, local self-government has come into effect. Its process and result are not especially satisfactory. It is probably because Korean centralism has fostered distinctive traits that still exist among contemporary Korean families and contemporary Koreans.

There is another perspective in the change of the contemporary Korean family. It is the notion of "compressed development."<sup>37</sup> The term "compressed development" comes from the fact that Korean society has undergone the same stages of industrialization in just two or three decades that Western societies required one or two centuries to pass through. This "compressed development" has brought with it change and problems to every segment of society and the family relationships.<sup>38</sup>

The recent concern and bewilderment over the Korean family is not simply related to the dysfunctional families but rather to a larger transition in family culture and family relationships. This bewilderment may lead to a sense of crisis of the Korean family.

Uhn Cho is informing the numbers of the changing Korean families as follows:

The size of Korean families has decreased from an average of 5.5 members in 1960 to 3.8 members in 1995. The divorce rate has increased from 3.1 percent of all marriages in 1960 to 16.4 percent in 1995. Over the same period, the average marriage age for men has increased from 25.4 to 29.3 and for women from 21.6 to 26.1. The number of pregnancies for the average women has dropped from 4.8 to 1.6, and the average period during which women choose to get pregnant has fallen from 16 years to 2 years. Average life expectancy has increased from 51.1 years to 67.4 years for men and from 57.3 years to 75.4 years for women.... In 1960, the size of the over-65 population was 726,000, or 2.9 percent of the total population; by 1995, this figure was 2,657,000, or 5.9 percent.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Uhn Cho, "Compressed Development and Family Culture," Korea Focus: On Current Topics 5, no. 3 (autumn 1997): 93.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 94.

Although these numbers show an actual change in the Korean family, all families are not so. It makes Korean families coexist with different family structures: traditional, modern and postmodern. The traditional Korean family is in transition and shares several characteristics with modern and postmodern families. It is not unusual for three generations, each with vastly different experiences, to live together under one roof: “an older agrarian-era generation, a middle industrial-era generation, and new information-age generation.”<sup>40</sup>

The major characteristics of the modern family developed in Korea in just the last 20 to 30 years, according to Cho, and are as follows:

First, romantic love became a primary prerequisite for marriage. Second, the pursuit of individual happiness and self-development took precedence over the family prestige. Third, in mother-child relations, children took center stage and maternal love was regarded as a primary value. Fourth, the family became the basic unit for strong emotional bonds.<sup>41</sup>

These transitions not only changed the way of courtship, but also redefined relations between husband and wife, parents and child, and between parents-in laws (especially, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law). These changes in family relationships can not be fully understood without examining the rapid industrialization and “compressed development” of Korea’s society system.<sup>42</sup> Changes in Korean family culture dramatically reflect just how much “compressed development” has affected Korean daily life.

First and foremost change have been the shifts in marital and parental relationships. In the last three years, for example, there have been a number of

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

parodies of the insecurities of men and their diminished status of the role of husbands. In 1995, a popular theme was “men with guts.” Then came the “lower syndrome” in 1996, followed by the “father with a drooping head” theme in 1997.<sup>43</sup> These parodies demonstrate the changing images of husbands in the Korean society.

Also, the Korean role of fatherhood is changing. They are now expected to help take care of the child when couples go out.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, Korean mothers have become instruments for university entrance exam preparation. Korean mothers suffer from “high school senior mother syndrome.”<sup>45</sup> They are judged by their children’s grades, and their children in turn are judged by their ability to enter a good university.

The relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law are rapidly changing. In the traditional Korean family, the conflicts between in-law relationships have been a significant problem. But, conflicts with their mothers-in-law are becoming less significant. According to Uhn’s numbers, the conflicts between in-laws accounted for some 60 to 70 percent of phone calls in 1989 and 1990; but recently this ratio has plunged to 30 percent. Rather an increasing number of working women is willing to live with their mothers-in-law for the convenience of childcare. Even, the Counseling Center for Domestic and Sexual Issues of Women Link, an association of women volunteers, has omitted “in-law conflicts” from its counseling categories.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, it is necessary for therapist to correctly understand the real changes of the modern Korean family system that was emotionally attached to patriarchal society and a male-dominated, success-motivated social structure. In any society, “the nature

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 98.

of the family changes as society changes.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Conflicts between the Traditional and the Contemporary Korean Family System**

One of the conflicts between traditional and contemporary Korean family system, Kyung-soo Chun contends, is the dualistic orientation of “ancestor-oriented” and “ego-oriented” principles must be recognized as one of the most important and interesting issues of kinship and family dynamics in Korean history.<sup>48</sup> He concludes, “there has been a pendulum-like movement between ancestor-centered and ego-centered kin group dynamics throughout Korean history.... Koreans are living within the fence of the family, no matter which way the pendulum swing.”<sup>49</sup>

In the traditional Korean family systems, the relationship between husband and wife, according to two Lees, is “independent”<sup>50</sup> where the wife has little knowledge of the husband’s activities outside of the home, and she is not expected to know about them. However, Korean family systems in the United States has little to do with independent system, but are centered upon “joint.”<sup>51</sup> The conflict between wife and husband seems to arise because there is no clear role differentiation who should perform, in the United States, roles that are not expected to be performed in Korea. It

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>48</sup> Kyung-soo Chun, “The Korean Family System and Its Transition: A New Perspective,” Korean and Korean American Studies Bulletin 5, nos. 2-3 (fall/winter 1994) : 3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>50</sup> Lee and Lee, 32-33. The Lees mention Elizabeth Bott’s three types of familiar activities: (1) *complementary*, (2) *independent*, and (3) *joint*. Bott defines three types of families activities. In *complementary* organization the activities of husband and wife are different and separate but fitted together to the family as a whole. In *independent* organization the activities are carried out separately by husband and wife without reference to each other. And in *joint* organization the activities are carried out separately by husband and wife without reference together. Elizabeth Bott, Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms, and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families (London: Tavistock Publications, 1957), 53.

<sup>51</sup> Lee and Lee, 33.

derives from the conflict between the Korean value system and the American value system.<sup>52</sup>

Tae Lyon Kim explored the change between the traditional and current parent-child relationship. According to Kim, if there is a gap in the parents' perception of themselves and the children's expectations, tension will arise in the relationship. Role tension will be reflected in the pattern and quality of the relationship.<sup>53</sup> He suggested a better parent-child relationship as six points: (1) recognition of problems in the family, (2) joint-participation in problem solving, (3) insight into role expectation and role perception, (4) recognition of familial transition in the changing society, (5) necessity of familial education, and (6) social effort.<sup>54</sup>

### **Korean American Family in the United States**

The Korean population in the United States is one of the fastest-growing ethnic minorities. The 1990 Census data and recent population projections show that there are approximately one million Koreans in the United States, which represents an increase of over 130% since 1980.<sup>55</sup> The character structure of Korean Immigrants is reflected in their economic activities and in their way of organizing basic community activities.<sup>56</sup>

This topic of Korean American Family in the United States is too big to present in these few pages. I deal with this topic in this project only for Korean wives in the intermarried families I counseled. Among my four cases studies, these wives are all

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 35-36.

<sup>53</sup> Tae Lyon Kim, 632-33.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 636-40.

<sup>55</sup> Rhee, 152.

<sup>56</sup> Illsoo Kim, 303.



Korean American raised in Korea married and immigrated to the United States. The single exception is *Young-suk Santiago*. The characteristics of the Korean American family in the United States are generally differ from Korean intermarried families. I will examine an overall picture in order to understand the characteristics of the family relationships in the immigrated family. I am especially concerned about the relationship between husband with a Korean wife and children with a Korean mother or stepmother.

First, I will examine the relationship between husband with a Korean wife in the Korean immigrant families in the United States. It will focus on role and value conflicts. As Elizabett Bott mentioned three types of familial activities, because the Korean family structure in Korea is “independent,” the wife has little knowledge of the husband’s activities outside of the home, and is not expected to know about them. In the United States the Korean family is more centered upon “joint” organization.<sup>57</sup>

The conflict between wife and husband seem to arise because there is no clear-cut role differentiation between wife and husband. First, the cause of problems between husband and wife can be classified into following categories: (1) socio-cultural, (2) ecological, and (3) economical.<sup>58</sup> “The socio-cultural cause is derived from family organization in an American social structure, and from the conflict between the Korean and American value system. The ecological cause would include cross-cultural differences, application of advanced technology, in daily living, and dispersed services provided by the communities. And the economical factor occupies

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<sup>57</sup> Lee and Lee, 33, cited in Bott, 53.

<sup>58</sup> Lee and Lee, 36.

an important part in the problems between husband and wife.”<sup>59</sup>

The second conflict in the Korean American family is based on the relationship between parent and child. There are some general gaps between Korean parent, especially Korean mother, and their children in communication problem, generation gap, children’s socialization, home education, food and clothes preference, and lack of friends to play with, etc.<sup>60</sup> It is really difficult for Korean American mothers, who think it their roles to teach and bear their Americanized children, to effectively deal with their children.

These can be said a kind of value conflict between parent and child. The most common conflict between Korean immigrant parents and the next generation is due to the cultural value differences in the concept of self and family. Asian cultural value, including Korea’s, derive from the 3,000 year tradition of Confucian’s teachings. “Confucian teachings stress work ethics (will rather than natural talents); life long self-cultivation (emphasis on higher learning and scholarship and respect for teachers); respect for elders and ancestors (the importance of family lineage); priority being to the interest of the family, group, and collective welfare over the individual; and respect for and conformity to the hierarchical structural and order of the society and family.”<sup>61</sup>

The difference in this value system is related to the identity in self and in family. “My identity,” according to Luke Kim and Grace Kim, is “the total sum of my being and the entirety of what I am. It is the totality of my physical, emotional, intellectual,

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>61</sup> Douglas Kim, “Korean American are Able to Take Best of Both Worlds,” panel presentation at the Korean American Student Conference (KASCON), 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, San Francisco, March 1993, 123.

social, cultural, spiritual, and conscious and unconscious thought processes and feelings.”<sup>62</sup> They continued to describe about the identity as follows:

Identity does not form naturally by itself, but identity formation is active processes in to which we can make considerable input and define who we are. We will be able to influence the shaping of our identities.... Many dimensions and components of ourselves contribute to the totality of our identities. To comprehend the concept of identity more clearly, we may break down the identity into its various dimensions and components, and consider the characteristics of each dimension and ingredient and how they contribute toward the totality of identity formation.<sup>63</sup>

In sum, the totality of self-identity is multifaceted and dynamic. Many factors and dimensions interact together and contribute synergistically or sometimes discordantly to the development of identity. There are aspects we have no choice over because they are given. But there are many components and dimensions of identity that we can intentionally choose and influence.<sup>64</sup> Luke Kim and Grace Kim use two interconnected or hyphenated words to describe our dual identity, such as Korean American, Chinese American, or African American.<sup>65</sup>

In searching, defining and developing the Korean American identity, Luke Kim and Grace Kim have described the multi-faceted factors and dimensions that contribute to the totality of one’s self-identity, and the different modes and phases of identity development.<sup>66</sup> They contended that “developing and maintaining a biculturally integrated “dual identity” is not an easy task, but it is a desirable and

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<sup>62</sup> Luke I. Kim and Grace S. Kim, “Searching for and Defining a Korean American Identity in a Multicultural Society,” in Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism, eds. Young Song and Ailee Moon, 116.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 124.

attainable goal. As a bicultural, cosmopolitan, and globally oriented person, one will find a more self-affirming and culturally enriching way of life.”<sup>67</sup>

### **Korean Women in the Intermarried Family System**

The characteristics of Korean women intermarried to American husbands are not unlike to those of Korean American families in the United States. The unique problems of the intermarried Korean women are generally intertwined with three family systems: the Confucian values of the traditional Korean family, the changing modern values of the contemporary Korean family, and the American cultures of the intermarried family. The categories of conflicts in the intermarried Korean woman's family are almost the same as that of the traditional Korean family and the Korean American family.

First category is the conflicts in the relationship between Korean wives and American husbands. They generally occur as soon as the married couples arrive in the United States. Three of four women in these case studies arrived in the United States soon after they married. Communication is always one of the greatest problem between husband and wife. It is not just language, but a misunderstanding in husband's logic, rationale, or cultural perspective. Even if Korean wife speaks in English, they may still not be talking the same language because of cultural differences that will not allow the intended message to be received.

Gin Y. Pang analyzed the Korean Americans' attitudes on intermarriages or interracial/ interethnic relationships. Pang's analysis was focused on the following three areas: “(1) the attitudes of parents and interviewees toward intermarriage; (2) the existence of a preferential hierarchy of choice for a spouse; and (3) the attitude toward

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

the relationship between Asian American women and White men.”<sup>68</sup> The result of Pang’s analysis was negative. Pang said, “The majority of the Korean American women and especially Korean American men expressed strong reservations about, and disapproval of, this pattern of intermarriage and relationship.”<sup>69</sup>

What I would refer from the Gin’s result is that the self-identity of the intermarried Korean women may be, not always, lower than that of the non-intermarried women. This is helpful to understand the intermarried Korean women who are unwilling to discuss their problems outside their house. It also shows that “they seldom seek professional help because they consider the emotional pain and worry caused by relational or environment problems as *pal-ja*, immutable destiny, which needs to be endured without complaint.”<sup>70</sup> In a clinical assessment, Korean American women as well as men are generally “vague about dates, specific of problems, and they become more evasive about their reactions and feeling.”<sup>71</sup> “When it occurs, it is better to postpone obtaining factual information and to concentrate on the client’s immediate concern, because it is difficult to determine whether they are deliberately making themselves unintelligible or are just confused and upset.”<sup>72</sup>

The second conflict between them is child discipline. The problem occurs when the husband intervenes in the mother’s method of childbearing. The Korean mother thinks that child-discipline is the father’s responsibility; childbearing is the mother’s job. Generally, the American husbands do not agree with this interpretation. The

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<sup>68</sup> Gin Yong Pang, 129.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>70</sup> Bok-Lim C. Kim, 289-90.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Korean wife thinks the husbands spoil children allowing them to become ill mannered.

In parent-child relationships, the “immigrant parent’ limited appreciation of the wide difference between American and Korean cultures and their ambivalence about the children’s acculturation cause them to make confusing demands on the children.”<sup>73</sup> Bok-Lim Kim writes an ironical but true statement:

They (Korean American parents) want them (their children) to be successful in school but to be obedient, respectful, and humble at home, not realizing that the attributes needed to succeed in American schools are assertiveness, initiative, and independent thinking. They want their children to be proficient in English and to retain fluency in Korean. They restrict afterschool activities with English-speaking peers but expect them to be socially popular. They profess no prejudice toward other racial and ethnic groups, yet resist interracial dating and marriage and explain this in terms of the importance of compatibility between the two families.<sup>74</sup>

As I mentioned earlier, it is true that the traditional Korean primacy of the father-son dyad from one generation to the next has recently been replaced with the development of the husband-wife dyad. However, it lasts only until the first child enters first grade. It is then “superseded by the mother-child dyad as the key relationship, because Koreans place such a high value on *hak-bul*, academic credentials, that the parents’ self esteem is intimately tied to the academic success or failure of their children.”<sup>75</sup>

Eunai Kim Shrake explored this conflict in the article of “Korean American mother’s parenting styles and adolescent behavior.”<sup>76</sup> Shrake concluded that Korean American parenting practice might be characterized as “high academic pressure,”

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 287.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>76</sup> Eunai Kim Shrake, “Korean American Mothers Parenting Styles and Adolescent Behavior,” in Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism, eds. Song and Moon, 187.

“authoritarian control,” “low communication,” and “poor supervision.”<sup>77</sup> In binding four elements to two, the problem patterns of Korean American parenting can be summarized as “parental pressure with poor supervision” and “authoritarian control with low communication.” This finding of this research may helpful to understand the relationship between Mi-suk Jackson, and her adolescent daughter, Anna, in the case of *the Jackson family*.

Third problems or conflicts between mother and daughter-in-law in the Korean American family, unlike the contemporary Korean family in Korea, are still quite common and can be intense. According to Bok-Lim Kim, “the Korean Family Legal Center estimates 70-80% of marital problems involve the wife’s in-laws.”<sup>78</sup> In fact, the issue of in-laws is so important that it is necessary for therapist “to inquire about the couple’s in-law relationships with every Korean American family regardless of the presenting problems.”<sup>79</sup> I did not deal with in-law relationships in all four cases; I agreed that the issue of in-laws should be inquired as a central problem.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Bok-Lim C. Kim, 285.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 5

### Understanding of Bowen Theory and Therapy

“The term family therapy,” Murray Bowen said, “is known to the informed lay person.... I believe it is a ‘*movement*.’”<sup>1</sup> He believed that “family movement,” which began in the early and mid 1950s, “grew out of an effort to find more effective treatment methods for the more severe emotional problems.”<sup>2</sup> “The current family movement,” which the current means 1970s, he believed, “was started by several different individual investigators who began with either a theoretical or clinical notion that the family was important.”<sup>3</sup>

In the Dictionary of Family Psychology and Family Therapy, family therapy means “therapy in which the family is the unit of treatment and more than one member of the family is seen individually or conjointly during the course of the therapy.”<sup>4</sup> In contrasting between family therapy and individual therapy, the characteristics of the family therapy are represented well in the dictionary.<sup>5</sup> On this

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<sup>1</sup> Bowen, 147 (original emphasis).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>4</sup> S. Richard Sauber, Luciano L’Abate, Gerald R. Weeks, and William L. Buchanan, “family therapy,” in The Dictionary of Family Psychology and Family Therapy, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1993), 166.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 206. (1) Family therapy, focused on illness of the family rather than the individual, is primarily interested in the processes that occur within the family as a group, rather than the intrapsychic disturbances of the individual. (2) The family therapist is responsible for the total family’s welfare, rather than the cure of any one individual. (3) The family therapist studies the individual as a member of the family group, relating behavior to interactions with other family members rather than the individual in depth, being often apart from the individual’s social environment and family relationship. (4) Family therapy emphasizes the “here and now” and ways the family can achieve healthy functioning rather than relating the present material to past experiences of the patient. (5) The family therapist uses the interactions between family members and their meanings as the content of the treatment rather than fantasy and dream materials, and their meanings. (6) In family therapy, family interactions and processes are pointed out by the therapist, and their meanings are explored as they



point, M. Bowen stated, “the one main difference between an individual and a family approach is ‘a shift of focus from the individual to the family.’”<sup>6</sup> As the focus shifted from the individual to the family, each was confronted with the dilemma of describing and conceptualizing the family relationship system. Individual theory did not have a conceptual model for a relationship system.<sup>7</sup> After all, the term family therapy “refers to such a variety of different methods, procedures, and techniques that the term is meaningless without further description or definition.”<sup>8</sup>

In the Handbook of Family Therapy, edited by Alan S. Gurman and David P. Kniskern in 1991, twelve models of family therapies are presented. All models of family therapy are systemic in nature in that they recognize the interconnectedness of individual, family, and social phenomena.<sup>9</sup> However, since the purpose of my project is focused on four major family relationships, especially through the Asian intermarried family cases, I will deeply explore only one family therapy: “The Bowen Theory.” The eight important concepts of Bowen Theory will be helpful to consider and to effectively treat the major family relationships related to four cases even if they

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occur rather than fantasy, and dreams may be interpreted and related by therapist to feelings, attitudes, and behavior. (7) In family therapy, patients’ identity evolves from a clarification of the role the patient plays in the family, the patient’s self-image in this role, and the patient’s role expectation rather than the patient’s integration made between conflicts of super ego and id. (8) In family therapy, the transference is diluted by the therapist as a reality figure rather than the distortion of the image of the therapist based on infantile emotional experience. (9) In family therapy, materials revealed by the patient are openly shared with the therapist. (10) The goals of family therapy are to attain effective family functioning, regardless of individual pathology, to understand oneself and other family members in relation to each other rather than oneself as a unique individual, and to establish healthy interactions between family members, rather than exploring and developing insights, and rather than gaining relief from inhibiting conflicts.

<sup>6</sup> Bowen., 289.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>9</sup> Herta A. Guttman, “Systems Theory, Cybernetics, and Epistemology,” in Handbook of Family Therapy, eds. Alan S. Gurman and David P. Kniskern (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1981), 2:51.

are in Asian American intermarriage. And so, I will explore and use mainly the eight important concepts of the Bowen theory for treatment and evaluation of four cases related to the major family relationships in the Asian American intermarriage.

### **Basic Characteristics of Bowen Theory**

Murray Bowen calls his family theory “Bowen theory” rather than family system theory, because family system theory has been confused with general system theory, which has a much broader frame of reference and no specific application to emotional functioning.<sup>10</sup> Systems thinking focuses on the facts of functioning in human relationships systems. It focuses what happened, and how, when, and where it happened, in so far as these observations could be based on observable facts. The method carefully avoid why explanations and the discrepant reasoning that follows.<sup>11</sup> He stressed, “My family systems theory is a specific theory about the functional facts of emotional functioning.”<sup>12</sup>

Bowen’s concept of emotional system, one of the most important in family systems theory, has provided a basis for establishing a behavioral link between the human and other animals.<sup>13</sup> The human family was earlier described as an emotional unit. It also can be described as an “emotional field.” One cannot see gravity, nor can one see the emotional field. But, the existence of a family emotional field is the product of an emotionally driven relationship process that is present in all families.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bowen, 358-59.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 360, 416.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 359.

<sup>13</sup> Michael E. Kerr and Murray Bowen, Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 27.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

Thus, the main concepts in the Bowen theory were developed from the functional facts of relationship systems.<sup>15</sup>

The core of Bowen theory has to do with the degree to which people are able to distinguish between the feeling process and the intellectual process.<sup>16</sup> The intellectual system is a function of the cerebral cortex which appeared last in man's evolutionary development, and is the main difference between man and the lower forms of life; while, the feeling system is postulated as a link between emotional states are represented in conscious awareness.<sup>17</sup> But, confusion often arises in connection with the use of the terms "emotion" and "feeling" in system theory, because in common usage the terms are frequently used interchangeably. Systems theory does differentiate between emotions and feelings, and allows the term 'emotional' to be applied to all living things.<sup>18</sup> Bowen is convinced that more of life is governed by automatic emotional forces than man is willing to acknowledge.<sup>19</sup> In other words, the different ways between feelings and intellect, which are either fused or differentiated, from each other, led Bowen to develop the concept of differentiation of self, a cornerstone of the Bowen theory.<sup>20</sup>

Edwin Friedman expressed four major interlocking concepts in Bowen theory that underpin all other Bowenian ideas and that "differentiate" Bowen theory from

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<sup>15</sup> Bowen, 360.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>18</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 30.

<sup>19</sup> Bowen, 356.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

other family theories.<sup>21</sup> As Friedman said, it would be difficult for me to deal with all the depth and complexities of Bowen theory within a few pages for this project.<sup>22</sup> Here I will only overview the characteristics of Bowen theory for this project.

Friedman's article was helpful to me to overview Bowen theory with overall perspective. He provided the uniqueness of Bowen theory with three characteristics as follows: (1) Bowen theory is not fundamentally about families, but about life.<sup>23</sup> (2) Bowen's theory has tendency to conceptualize in terms of universal continua rather than discrete categories.<sup>24</sup> (3) Bowen's theory emphasizes on the self-development as the emotional being of the therapist.<sup>25</sup>

Now, I will only describe the meaning and characteristics of these interlocking concepts of Bowen theory. And then I will explore on Bowen theory in therapy. On the family evaluation of four cases related to the four family relationships, I will explore in Chapter 7.

### **Eight Concepts of Bowen Theory: Meaning and Characteristics**

As most people know, Bowen theory is made up eight numbers of interlocking concepts, including two concepts in 1975. First the six concepts have been started in 1957 and then were finally published as a coherent, theoretical system in 1966. These notions orderly started are as follows: the nuclear family emotional system, the family projection process, differentiation of self, triangle, multigenerational transmission

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<sup>21</sup> Edwin H. Friedman, "Bowen Theory and Therapy," in Handbook of Family Therapy, eds. Gurman and Kniskern, 2: 139. Those four constructs are differentiation, emotional system, multigenerational transmission, and emotional triangle.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 134. "It would be difficult to do justice to the depth and complexities of Bowen theory within the framework of an entire book, no less the confines of a single chapter."

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-36.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-38.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 138-39.

process, and sibling position.<sup>26</sup> Finally, in 1975, he added two more concepts: the emotional cutoff and societal regression. Among them, “the notion of differentiation of self,” Bowen refers several times in his book, “is the cornerstone of Bowen theory.”<sup>27</sup> However, as Friedman said, to the concepts of Bowen theory maybe add other concepts, for example, a ninth, spirituality, because “he (Bowen) later began to add, but never finished developing.”<sup>28</sup>

Bowen describes, “the theory involves two main variables: the degree of anxiety and the degree of integration of the differentiation of self.”<sup>29</sup> There are several variables having to do with anxiety or emotional tension, and also there are far more variables that have to do with the level of integration of the differentiation of self.

Three of eight concepts of the Bowen theory apply to over-all characteristics of the family, and the other five concepts focus on details within certain areas of the family.<sup>30</sup> These three concepts are the differentiation of self, triangles, and the nuclear family emotional system. Now, I will only describe the meaning and characteristics of eight important concepts of Bowen theory.

### **The Differentiation of Self**

The differentiation of self, the cornerstone of Bowen theory of human relationships, describes the fact that people are defined according to the degree of fusion between intellectual and emotional functioning. “These fused people are dominated by their automatic emotional system. Consequently they are less flexible,

<sup>26</sup> Bowen, 358.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 306, 362, 424.

<sup>28</sup> Friedman, 139.

<sup>29</sup> Bowen, 361.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 362.

less adaptable, and more emotionally dependent on those around them.”<sup>31</sup> In the concepts of the differentiation of self scale, the term *scale* conveys the notion “that people are different from each other and that this difference can be estimated from clinical information. It is not a scale to be used as a psychological instrument by people not familiar with the theory and the variables in a relationship system.”<sup>32</sup>

According to Bowen, there are two kinds of people according to the scale of differentiation: people at the high levels and people at the low levels. The former people with most differentiation between emotional and intellectual functioning are more free to live their emotional lives to the fullest, or they have the capacity to make decisions based on intellect and reasoning when confronted with reality issues. The latter people have emotion and intellect so fused that intellectual functioning is submerged in emotionality that their lives are dictated by emotionality.<sup>33</sup>

Kerr and Bowen explain this simply the basic and functional levels of differentiation as follows: “Basic differentiation is functioning that is not dependent on the relationship process; functional differentiation is functioning that is dependent on the relationship process.”<sup>34</sup> On the functional level, Kerr and Bowen explained as follows:

The functional level is influenced by the level of chronic anxiety in a person’s most important relationship systems. When anxiety is low, people are less reactive and more thoughtful.... When anxiety is high, people can become more reactive and less thoughtful.... The higher the basic level, the more a person can maintain high functioning and not focus on others even in a highly stressful situation. He can tolerate anxiety within himself and is not easily ‘infected’ by the anxiety of others.... Functional level can be enhanced by relationship, drugs, beliefs, cultural values, religious dogma, and even superstitions. It can rise and

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<sup>31</sup> Sauber et al., 101.

<sup>32</sup> Bowen, 306.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 424.

<sup>34</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 98.

fall quickly or be stabilized over long periods, depending largely on the status of central relationships. After a divorce, the functioning of one spouse may rise and that of the other may decline. This is a change in functional level, not in basic level.<sup>35</sup>

This means that functional level is not usually equivalent to basic level. In other words, the reference to a scale level (0-100), as I will examine below, generally refers to basic levels, and because basic level can be masked by functional level, it is often difficult to determine a basic scale level.<sup>36</sup>

To explain the concept of differentiation of self, as one way of demonstrating the power of Bowen's scale of differentiation, Friedman used the bipolar figure, shown the horizontal axis, marked "condition," and the vertical axis, labeled "response."<sup>37</sup> It is the degree of differentiation in a person or a family. Differentiation as used by Bowen, according to Friedman, "refers more to a process than to a goal that can ever be achieved, and refers to a direction in life rather than a state of being."<sup>38</sup> He says, taking an example, "When people say, 'I differentiated from my wife, my child, my parent, etc.,' that proves they do not understand the concept."<sup>39</sup> Bowen's scale of differentiation is connected to Bowen theory's striving for unity.<sup>40</sup>

Another important part of the differentiation of self is that there are two kinds of self: solid self, which is determined by forces from within self, and pseudo-self, which is determined by relationship forces. Solid self is the relatively fixed level of

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>37</sup> Friedman, 142.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 142.

differentiation and pseudo-self can be increased by a congenial relationship and emotional approval and decreased by a negative relationship or disapproval. In other words, pseudo-self is a functional self.<sup>41</sup>

Lastly, Bowen has divided the scale of differentiation into four ranges of functioning (0-25, 25-50, 50-75, 75-100), and has defined some of the characteristics of people in each range.<sup>42</sup>

First, one basic criterion for assigning a person a person a basic level of 25 or below is the inability to differentiate between thoughts and feeling. Major life decisions are based on what feels right. They are so responsive to others' opinions and to what others want them to do that their functioning is almost totally governed by their emotional reactions to the environment.<sup>43</sup> Most effective therapy for a person in the 0-25 range is usually with other people who are in relationship to him. This might be a parent or adult sibling who is functioning on a somewhat higher level and who is motivated to work on himself in relationship to the dysfunctional person. If this parent, sibling, or other person can stay in contact with the poorly functioning one and maintain his own functioning, for example, by not assuming excessive responsibility for the dysfunctional one, the dysfunctional person will often improve.<sup>44</sup>

Second, people in the 25-50 range adapt quickly to the prevailing ideology, lacking beliefs and convictions of their own. They adopt viewpoints that best complement their emotional makeup and look to outside authorities such as cultural values, religion, philosophy, the law, rulebooks, science, physicians, and other sources

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<sup>41</sup> Bowen., 424, 306.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 366-71.

<sup>43</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 101.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 102.



to support their position in life.<sup>45</sup> People in the 35-40 range are sensitized to emotional disharmony, to the opinions of others, and to creating a good impression. Also they have low of solid self, an important component of basic differentiation, but reasonable levels of pseudo-self, an important component of functional differentiation. The principles and beliefs of pseudo-self are quickly changed to enhance one's image with others or to oppose others.<sup>46</sup> A main difference between the 0-25 and 25-50 groups is that the 25-50 people have some capacity for working to raise their level of differentiation. The probability is much higher in the 35-50 range; the 25-35 group tend to lose motivation when they get comfortable.<sup>47</sup>

Third, at the 50-75 range people have fairly well defined opinions and beliefs on most essential issues. They are aware of the difference between feelings and intellectual principle. In the lower part of this range (50-60), however, people are still so responsible to the relationship system that they hesitate to say what they believe. Over 60 people are freer to have a choice between being governed by the intellectual and feeling world. They have less chronic anxiety, are less emotionally reactive, and have more solid self than lower-scale people.<sup>48</sup>

And lastly, Bowen has left the 95-100 range as hypothetical or for theoretical purposes, considering it essentially impossible for anyone to have all the characteristics of 100 on the scale. Rare people in the 85-95 range would have most of the characteristics. A person who functions in the 85-95 range is principle-oriented and goal-directed. He begins growing away from parents in infancy and becomes an

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 105-06.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 106.

inner directed adult. He can respect the identity of another without becoming critical or emotionally involved in trying to modify the life course of another. He is realistic in the assessment of self and others are also realistic.<sup>49</sup>

Until now I examined the concept of the differentiation of self through mainly Bowen and Kerr, and Friedman's statements. The important is actually that how to relate and apply these theoretical notions into these four cases related to the family relationships, especially in the situation of Asian American intermarriage. Considering this concept, I will apply and evaluate them in Chapter 7, and here again I will continue to summarize the other concepts of Bowen theory.

### **Triangles (Emotional Triangles)**

Before I will examine the concept of the triangles, I first have a mind to quote the implicative and concise summarized statement of the concepts between the differentiation of self and triangle by Daniel V. Papero:

The level of differentiation of any person indicates his or her sensitivity to others, the intensity of the feeling states and responses that accompany such sensitivity, and the degree to which automatic or instinctive processes override or decrease that person's ability to guide behavior with careful reflection or thought. The less differentiated a person is, the more his or her life decisions are rooted in sensitivity and response to important people. The more such sensitivity governs the behavior of each party to a relationship, the more the pair acts as a unit rather than as separate individuals. When adequate anxiety is present, such a unit behaves in a predictable manner. The *triangle* describes this process.<sup>50</sup>

In his article, Papero refers to the inevitability of triangle in the field of the family when three interconnected relationships of family as a unit is unstable. In Bowen's words, because a two-person relationship is essentially unstable, when stress

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>50</sup> Daniel V. Papero, "Training in Bowen Theory," in Handbook of Family Therapy Training and Supervision, eds. Howard A. Liddle, Douglas C. Breunlim, and Richard C. Schwartz (New York: Guilford Press, 1988), 66.

increases, and it involves additional people, one of the two will automatically involve a third.<sup>51</sup>

The triangle is the basic molecule of an emotional system, and the smallest stable relationship unit.<sup>52</sup> This term is contrasted with *triad*, which has come to fix connotations.<sup>53</sup> Friedman refers to emotional triangles, saying, “while the term is often shortened to triangle, the concept is more complex than a triad.”<sup>54</sup> “Emotional triangles have specific rules that govern their emotional processes, such as the idea that you cannot change a relationship between two others or between another person and his or her habit.”<sup>55</sup> The term triangle defines the fact that “emotional forces flow back and forth between three poles.”<sup>56</sup> Kerr described that “the major influence on the activity of a triangle is anxiety.... When anxiety increase, a third person becomes involved in the tension of the twosome, creating a triangle. This involvement of a third person decreases anxiety in the twosome by spreading it through three relationships.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Bowen, 425.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 424.

<sup>53</sup> Sauber et al., 411.

<sup>54</sup> Friedman, 150.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 150-51. Friedman said the following about the concept of an emotional triangle: “The concept of an emotional triangle, particularly of interlocking triangles, also helps plot the path of multigenerational transmission when viewing genograms, and can help us see things as similar that we might otherwise treat as different.... On the other hand, the concept of an emotional triangle suggests that possibility that the same family position most conducive to postpartum depression today as well as to many modern birth-giving moralities, namely, an emotional triangle between a passive or critical husband and a distant or critically dependent mother (of the new mother), was a major variable that influenced which mothers died and which mothers recovered from childbirth complications years ago.... Thus, the concept of an emotional triangle can identify similarities over the generations that one might otherwise not see if one focused on conventional sociological distinctions such as the age in which an event occurred.”

<sup>56</sup> Bowen, 425.

<sup>57</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 135.

I can view the triangle pattern in the family relationships of my cases. For example, in the Jackson family, his daughter by the former wife became a triangle, and in the Santiago family, Santiago is a triangle between his wife and his mother-in-law. That is, a son or a daughter can be triangled into the tension between couples, father can become triangled into the tension between mother and son, a third member can be between the two siblings, and between in-law relationships.

Lastly, the major clinical significance of the concept of an emotional triangle is that it focuses on phenomenology rather than interpretation.<sup>58</sup> Because triangle describes what, how, when, and where of relationship, not the why.<sup>59</sup> The knowledge of triangle is an important factor in working toward increased differentiation of self.<sup>60</sup> Triangles are forever, at least in families.<sup>61</sup>

### **Nuclear Family Emotional System**

Awareness of the concepts of the emotional system, chronic anxiety, differentiation of self, and triangle makes it possible to see the interrelationship of the various process that can be observed in the nuclear family emotional system.<sup>62</sup> This concept describes the patterns of emotional forces in a nuclear family in a generation.<sup>63</sup> The beginning of a nuclear family is a marriage, and the two spouses begin a marriage with lifestyle patterns and level of differentiation developed in their

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<sup>58</sup> Friedman, 151.

<sup>59</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 134.

<sup>60</sup> Papero, 67.

<sup>61</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 135.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>63</sup> Bowen, 425.

families of origin.<sup>64</sup> One of the best views of the level of differentiation of the spouses is provided by the way the spouses handle dating, marriage, and reproduction.

<sup>65</sup> People have generally tendency to pick spouses who have the same levels of differentiation, and most spouses can have the closest and most open relationship in their adult lives during courtship.<sup>66</sup> The lower the level of differentiation, the greater the potential problems for the future, the more intense the emotional fusion of marriage.<sup>67</sup>

The fusion of the two pseudo-selves into a common self occurs when they commit themselves to each other. In other words, the fusion symptoms begin to develop when they finally get married. One of the fusion symptoms, for example, is that one spouse becomes more the dominant decision-maker for the common self, while the other adapts to the situation. However, it is important to understand that the dominant and adaptive positions are determined not by the gender of spouses but by the position that each had in their families of origin. It is empirically almost true that there are as many dominant females as males, and as many adaptive males as females. These characteristics played a major role in their original choice of each other as partners.<sup>68</sup>

There are three major areas in which the amount of undifferentiation in the marriage comes to be manifested in symptoms. Three categories of dysfunction occur in nuclear families: (1) marital conflict; (2) dysfunction or illness in one spouse; and

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 376.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 377.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 366-67.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 377.

(3) impairment of one or more children.<sup>69</sup> I will explore in detail three categories later.

The impairment of one or more children means the projection of the family problems to children. It is so important that Bowen provides a separate theoretical concept. It is the concept of family projection process.

### **Family Projection Process**

As a part of total theory, this concept describes the details of the process by which parental problems are projected to one or more children, and the most important way that family emotional process is transmitted from one generation to the next.<sup>70</sup>

The process is so universal that it is present to some degree in all families.<sup>71</sup> According to Bowen, the children selected for the family projection process are those who conceived and born during stress in the mother's life. Among common special children are only children, an oldest child, a single child of one sex among several of the opposite sex, or a child with some defect, and the special children who were fretful, colicky, rigid, and nonresponsive to the mother from the beginning.<sup>72</sup> Although they are not always right, I believe, it is generally right.

A major factor in this process is the parents' level of differentiation of self: the greater each parent's level of undifferentiation, the more difficult it is for each to see the child's reality.<sup>73</sup> The projection process operates through the parents' anxiety

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<sup>69</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 163; and Bowen, 377-79.

<sup>70</sup> Bowen, 425.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 379.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 380-81.

<sup>73</sup> Papero, 67.

about the child, often present even before birth. The parent, often the mother, relates to the child on the basis of that anxiety rather than from a realistic awareness of the child's needs.<sup>74</sup>

The greatest number of people impaired by the projection process are those who do less well with life and who have lower levels of differentiation than their siblings, and who may go for a few generations before producing a child who becomes seriously impaired symptomatically.<sup>75</sup> In clinical work, the one who is mainly focused on the family projection process is *the triangled child*. Almost every family has one child who was more triangled than the others, and whose life adjustment is less good than the others. In doing multigenerational family histories, it is relatively easy to estimate the family projection process and identity the triangled child by securing historical data about the life adjustments of each sibling.<sup>76</sup>

Therefore, the family projection process continues through multiple generations. Now, I will describe the concept of multigenerational transmission process.

### **Multigenerational Transmission Process**

As I said the above, the family projection process continues through multiple generations. Bowen explained, "In any family, one child who was the primary object of the family projection process emerges with a lower of differentiation than the parents and does less well in life. Other children who were minimally involved with the parents emerge with about the same levels of differentiation as the parents. And

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Bowen, 381.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 382.

those who grow up relatively outside the family emotional process develop better levels of differentiation than the parents.”<sup>77</sup> He continued, “If we follow the most impaired child through successive generations, we will see one line of decent producing individuals with lower and lower levels of differentiation.”<sup>78</sup>

In summary, if a person, as a consequence of the family projection process, grows up with a lower of differentiation than those of the parents and marries someone with a similar level, that next generation will emerge with a lower level of differentiation than that of the original parents. In this way, across generations, the sections of families move toward greater and lesser levels of differentiation.<sup>79</sup> The process may go rapidly a few generations, even eight to ten generations. This is the concept of the multigenerational transmission process.

I have no enough pages here to deal with about the outcomes of the multigenerational emotional process; however, according to Kerr and Bowen, there are two outcomes: schizophrenia and major physical illness.<sup>80</sup> Rather, for the treatment of my cases, I will refer to another point: an implication for therapy. Kerr said. “If each generation’s emotional functioning is connected to the emotional functioning of preceding generations, and if clinical dysfunctions reflect outcomes of this multigenerational process, then an extremely important component of the process of psychotherapy is an individual’s doing the research and thinking necessary to convince himself as to whether this theoretical construct is with the facts, particularly

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 384.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Papero, 67.

<sup>80</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 236-51.



the facts in his own family.”<sup>81</sup>

When I consider the people in my cases, I can find that they are imprisoned by blaming self and/or others for their own and/or other’s problems. And following the concepts of Bowen theory, I could apply into these cases with the points that “the lower the level of differentiation, the more this tends to be the cases, and the more they do this within themselves, the more they assumes others do it too.”<sup>82</sup>

For the theoretical and therapeutic implications, Kerr suggests as follows:

Simply collecting information about multigenerational families is not enough to change a way of thinking....To alter a way of thinking a person must decide if his data are more consistent with an individual theoretical model or with a systems model....The more neutrality a person can develop through learning and thinking, and the more self he can develop through action, the more his problematic feelings about himself and others will resolve. This type of change occurs over a period of years, however, if a person can look at a four or five generation diagram of his own family and really see it as a living organism, a multigenerational emotional unit that changes gradually over time in occurrence with precise principle, he is beyond blaming self or others.”<sup>83</sup>

History speaks of family traditions, family ideals, and so on. If we follow the multigenerational lineage of those who emerge with higher levels of differentiation, we will see a line of highly functioning and very successful people.<sup>84</sup>

### **Sibling Position**

Sibling position, the last concept of Bowen’s theory, is an adaptation of Toman’s work on the personality profiles of each sibling position. In his book Family Constellation, Walter Toman presented behavior profiles of the characteristics of

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid. 254.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>84</sup> Bowen, 385.

individuals occupying specific sibling positions in families.<sup>85</sup> According to Bowen, Toman's basic thesis is that important personality characteristics fit with the sibling position in which a person grew up, and Toman's ideas provides a new dimension toward understanding how a particular child is chosen as the object of the family projection process.<sup>86</sup>

Toman's work, however, focused on normal families, and it does not take into account the processes by which a child becomes involved in the parents' lack of differentiation.<sup>87</sup> On this point, Kerr said that family system theory adds an important parameter, differentiation of self, to Toman's normal sibling profiles.<sup>88</sup> In other words, Toman's research described *characteristics* of functioning, but not *levels* of functioning.<sup>89</sup> Bowen also said, "the use of Toman's profiles, together with differentiation and project, make it possible to assemble reliable presumptive personality profiles on people in past generations on whom verifiable facts are missing."<sup>90</sup>

For example, all older brothers of brothers are not the same. A mature older brother accepts leadership and responsibility easily, but he does not attempt to control or to intrude on others; while, an immature older brother may be a dogmatic and overbearing leader who fails to respect the rights of others.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, there is no

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<sup>85</sup> Cited in Papero, 68.

<sup>86</sup> Bowen, 385.

<sup>87</sup> Papero, 68.

<sup>88</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 315.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 316.

<sup>90</sup> Bowen, 385.

<sup>91</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 316.

such thing as a best sibling position. Each position has its positive and negative aspects.<sup>92</sup>

### **Emotional Cutoff**

Two new concepts, emotional cutoff and societal regression, were added to the six concepts of Bowen theory later. “The first, the emotional cutoff, was merely a refinement and a new emphasis of former theoretical principles. The last and eighth concept, societal regression, had been rather well refined by 1972, and was finally added as a separate concept in 1975.”<sup>93</sup>

Emotional cutoff, which was formerly included partly in the nuclear family emotional process and partly in the family projection process, describes the most prominent mechanism involved in emotional process between the generations.<sup>94</sup> The basic element of the concept of emotional cutoff is in the degree of unresolved emotional attachment to the parents.<sup>95</sup> All people have some degree of unresolved emotional attachment to their parents or larger extended family systems. The lower the level of differentiation of self, the greater the degree of unresolved attachment. The life pattern of cutoff is determined by the way people handle their unresolved emotional attachment to their parent. People manage the unresolved attachment through varying degrees of emotional cutoff.<sup>96</sup>

Bowen described the three ways: “(1) by the intrapsychic process of denial and isolation of self while living close to the parents; (2) by physically running away;

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Bowen, 358.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 426.

<sup>95</sup> Papero, 68.

<sup>96</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 324.

and (3) by a combination of emotional isolation and physical distance.”<sup>97</sup> The important point is that although the person runs away from his family of origin, the distance may insulate one from the effects of undifferentiation, but it can not change one’s level of differentiation. Also although the individual appears to handle the relationship to the parents, he or she remains vulnerable to loss of autonomy in other important relationship.<sup>98</sup>

On the evaluation of the degree of emotional cutoff, Kerr and Bowen explains, “Cutoff is evaluated on information about the equality of emotional contact between people.... It is often difficult because all the members of a family living in close physical proximity do not have the same degree of emotional contact with the family and all members of a family who are physically distant do not have the same degree of emotional contact. So physical distance or proximity is not a reliable indicator of emotional cutoff.”<sup>99</sup> Therefore, it is little help to merely tell go back to one’ own family. Rather, some people may be very anxious about returning to their families. Techniques for the helping families to reestablish contact have been sufficiently developed so that it is now a family therapy method in its own right.<sup>100</sup>

### **Societal Regression**

As a psychiatrist, Bowen was interested in social problem as well as family problem. This concept was first defined, especially, through the paper on human reaction to environmental problem addressed in the Environmental Protection Agency in 1972, and formally added to the theory in 1975. Finally, Bowen identified a link

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<sup>97</sup> Bowen, 382.

<sup>98</sup> Papero, 68.

<sup>99</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 325.

<sup>100</sup> Bowen, 384.

between the family and society that was sufficiently trustworthy for him to extend the basic theory about the family into the larger societal arena.<sup>101</sup>

Brief description on the concept of societal emotional process, by Kerr, is “how a prolonged increases in societal anxiety can result in a gradual lowering of the functional level of differentiation of a society.”<sup>102</sup> However, Kerr said that the societal process is not directly relevant to family evaluation, because the emotional process in society influences the emotional process in families, but it is a background influence affecting all families.<sup>103</sup> In other words, this concept proceeds in logical steps from the family to larger and larger social groups, to the total society.<sup>104</sup>

Therefore, the lower the level of differentiation of self, the more a family’s emotional process is influenced by societal emotional process. And the lower the functional level of a society, the greater the incidence of “social symptoms” such as a high crime rate, a high divorce rate, an increase clamor for rights and a notable neglect of responsibilities.<sup>105</sup>

Until now, I described the meaning and characteristics of eight concepts of Bowen theory. When each concept is studied separately, however, it is sometimes difficult to appreciate the interrelationship between the concepts. Bowen has referred to them as “interlocking” concepts.<sup>106</sup> Next, I will turn to Bowen theory in therapy.

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>102</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 334.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Bowen, 387.

<sup>105</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 334.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

### **Bowen Theory in Therapy**

In the principles and techniques of Bowen's family therapy, the method is quite different from other methods of multiple family therapy.<sup>107</sup> The difference, as Friedman said like a motto, is that "the theory was not prelude to the practice; thinking it is the practice."<sup>108</sup> It means that Bowen's theory tries not to emphasize any distinction between theory and therapy. Therefore, the discussion of the application that follows is for the purpose of further clarifying the theory, rather than some culmination that describes how to do it.<sup>109</sup>

As mentioned in the concepts of Bowen's theory, the goal of Bowen's therapy, in one word, is to decrease anxiety and to increase the level of differentiation of self. Friedman also assumes that "the ultimate aim of all Bowen's therapy is to promote differentiation in a family to the extent that therapist has promoted his or her own."<sup>110</sup> In this aspect, the methodology of Bowen theory in therapy is "relatively uncomplicated."<sup>111</sup>

In the Bowen's therapy, the "being" of the therapist is important to promote differentiation in a family.<sup>112</sup> The therapist's presence rather than any specific behavior is required to the therapy. The focus of the clinician is always on the level of differentiation of self and not on a particular technique to aid the family, because the level of differentiation of the clinician has a great influence on a family's

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<sup>107</sup> Bowen, 241.

<sup>108</sup> Friedman, 152.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Papero, 69.

<sup>112</sup> Friedman, 152.

response.<sup>113</sup>

### **The Evaluation Interview**

The appraisal of a symptomatic family begins with the initial telephone contact.<sup>114</sup> The evaluation and treatment of a family may include one family member, a husband and wife, an entire nuclear family, or some other combination of nuclear and extended family members. But, regardless of the number of family members in the sessions, the basic principles of differentiation apply.<sup>115</sup> This point made me apply the four cases with basic concepts of Bowen's theory even if I did not include every family member of the cases for interview.

Also, since Bowen views family therapy as a way of conceptualizing a problem rather than as a process that requires a certain number of people to attend the sessions, he is content to work with one family member, especially if that person is motivated to work on self-differentiation from his or her family of origin.<sup>116</sup> The important is that even though a therapist interview with just one family member, if the therapist's concepts encompass a family relationship process and a connection between that process and individual functioning, a complete course of psychotherapy with the one family member is family therapy.<sup>117</sup>

Family evaluation interviews begin with a history of the presenting problem, focusing especially on the symptoms - physical, emotional, and social - and their

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<sup>113</sup> Papero, 72.

<sup>114</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 286.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Irene Goldenberg and Herbert Goldenberg, Family Therapy: An Overview, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Pacific Grove, Calif.: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1991), 158.

<sup>117</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 286.

impact on the symptomatic person or relationship.<sup>118</sup> Also, a family evaluation interview includes the information of the history of the nuclear family that begun at the point the husband and wife first met and subsequent many questions to know the historical pattern of their emotional family functions.<sup>119</sup> And the history of the extended family as the final part of family evaluation interview should be included in the format of the family evaluation.<sup>120</sup> The nature of the nuclear family's relationship with the extended families, in other words, the parallels in the relationship patterns between the husband and wife and his or her parents may offer important clues poor differentiation from the families of origin.<sup>121</sup>

### **The Genogram**

Next important concept of Bowen therapy is the genogram, "a schematic diagram of the family relationship system based on the genetic tree, usually involving several generations."<sup>122</sup> Genograms often provide families with their first inkling of intergenerational family relationship patterns.<sup>123</sup> The recording of the information a therapist gathers about a clinical family or about his own family follows a basic format and uses standard symbols. The symbols provide a visual picture of a family tree: who the members are, what their names are, ages, sibling positions, marital status, divorces, and so on, typically extending back at least three generations for both

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<sup>118</sup> Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 158.

<sup>119</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 293-99.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 300-06.

<sup>121</sup> Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 160.

<sup>122</sup> Sauber et al., 184.

<sup>123</sup> Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 160.



parents.<sup>124</sup>

The family diagram is an outgrowth of family systems theory. Therefore, the information contained on a family diagram is meaningless without a through understanding of the principles that govern emotional systems.<sup>125</sup> In the Genogram's concept, the important is that "no matter how complicated a diagram is, the data still reflect basic patterns of emotional functioning and basic intensities of emotional process present in a multigenerational family."<sup>126</sup>

Genograms of these four families I selected are as follows (Figures 1-4):

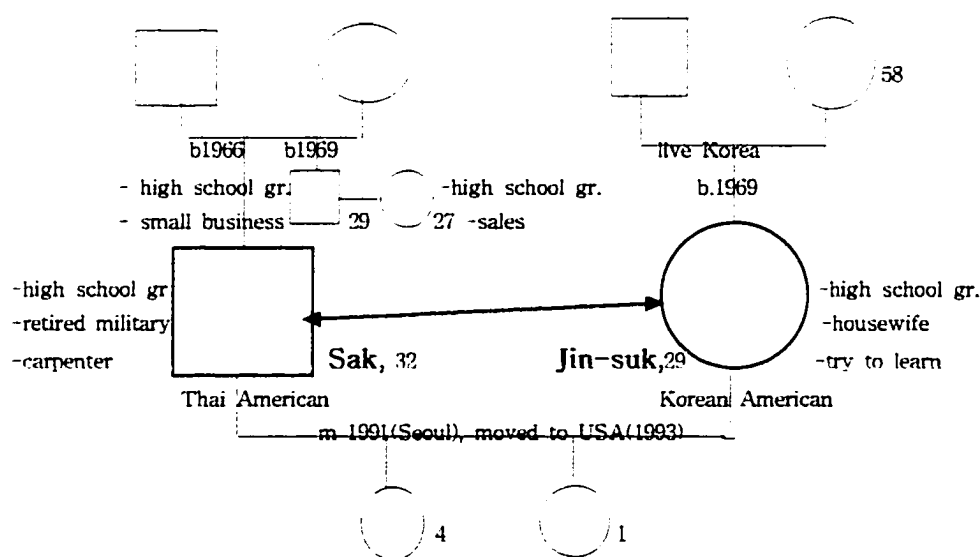


Figure 1: *The Mala Family*

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Kerr and Bowen, 306.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 308.

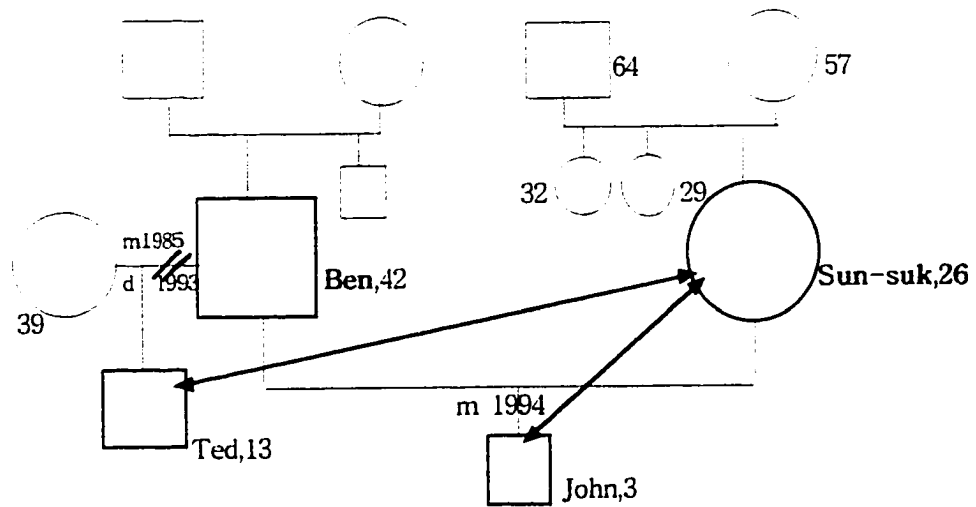


Figure 2: *The Ito Family*

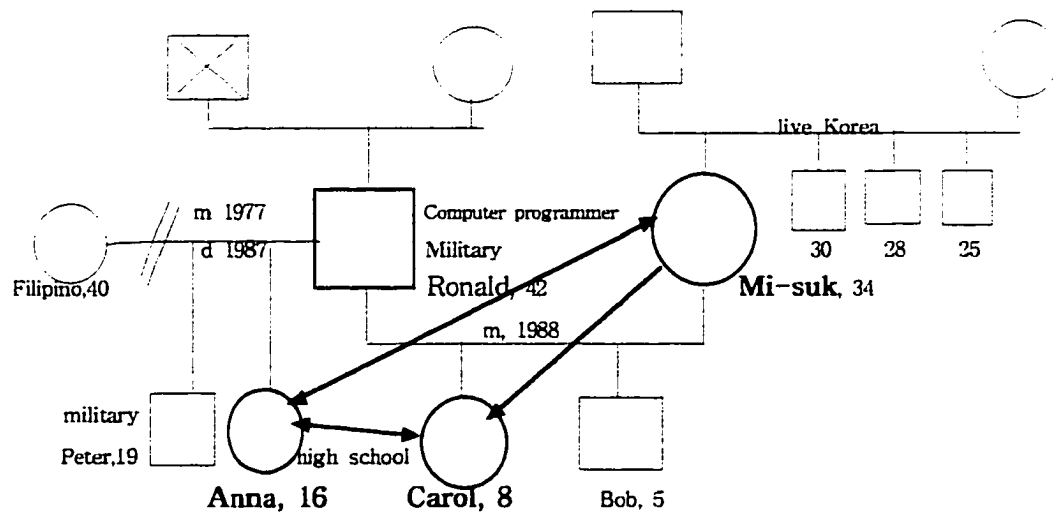


Figure 3: *The Jackson Family*

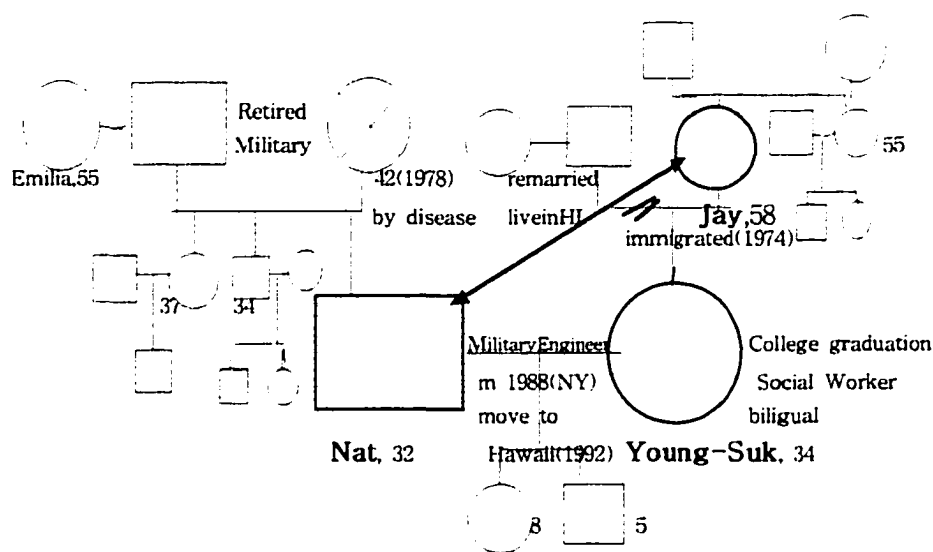


Figure 4: *The Santiago Family*

### **Family Intervention Techniques**

Therapy based on Bowen's theory, no matter what the nature of the presenting clinical problem is, as mentioned earlier, is always governed by two basic goals: (1) to reduce of anxiety and (2) to increase the level of differentiation of self of each family. In other words, Bowen's overall objective is for each family member to maximize his or her self-differentiation.<sup>127</sup>

Bowen presents himself as a researcher helping the family members. The term he prefers is "coaching," the clinician functions more as a consultant and teacher than as a therapist.<sup>128</sup> Coaching often occurs with only one member of a family, and its focus is primary on the family of origin, and the responsibility for the effort remains

<sup>127</sup> Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 162.

<sup>128</sup> Papero, 69.

with the person, not the coach.<sup>129</sup> Therefore, When the coach, as an active expert who helps individuals change the nature of their relationships with parents, siblings, and other extended family members, has taught them successfully, the individual family members are responsible for the actual work of changing.<sup>130</sup>

On the conduct of therapy that Bowen has tried to teach his disciple, Friedman suggested three principles. They have to do with (1) the objectivity of the therapist, (2) the effect of proximity on protoplasm, and (3) a natural system-based view of healing as a self-regenerative process.<sup>131</sup>

According to Bowen, with this method of family therapy, the therapist has four main functions: “(1) Defining and clarifying the relationship between the spouse; (2) Keeping self detriangled from the family emotional system; (3) Teaching the functioning of emotional systems; and (4) Demonstrating differentiation by taking “I position” standing during the course of the therapy.”<sup>132</sup>

First function of Bowenian therapist is to define and clarify the relationship between the spouse. Generally speaking, all spouses react and respond to emotional complex in the other without really knowing the other. After marriage, each quickly begins to learn the subjects that make the other anxious, avoids the subject, and many subjects become taboo for discussion. Most spouses attempt to resolve the communication gap by “talking it out,” with less than satisfactory results.<sup>133</sup> As a typical session, the therapist opens by asking one-spouse, for example the husband,

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 162.

<sup>131</sup> Friedman, 152.

<sup>132</sup> Bowen, 247.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 248.

questions such as what kind of progresses he has made since the last session and most object report. And then, therapist turns to the other spouse, wife, and ask for her thoughts while he was talking. If their comments are minimal, therapist asks sufficient questions more.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, “when obvious feelings are stirred p during a session, the goal is to get them *talking about* the feeling, rather than expressing it.”<sup>135</sup>

According to Bowen, “emotional responsiveness can profoundly affect the course of a relationship. ... This level of emotional responsiveness in a marriage has been described as part of the emotional interdependence, and also as part of the family emotional process.”<sup>136</sup> Therefore, a goal in therapy is “to be aware of such mechanisms, to define them in as much as detail as possible, and to help the spouses become better observers in an effort to define more and more of them.”<sup>137</sup>

Second function of Bowenian therapist is to keep self-detriangled from the family emotional system. When the therapist begins to the clinical work with the spouse, he needs to learn about the triangles, and it is important for him to use his knowledge successfully in the emotional systems. According to Bowen, “A basic principle in this theoretical-therapeutic system is that the emotional problem between two people will resolve automatically if they remain in contact with a third person who can remain free of the emotional field between them, while actively relating to each.”<sup>138</sup> In other words, the therapist should keep talking, especially in response to a triangling move. “If he has the right degree of emotional distance, it is almost

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 250.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 251.

automatic for him to say and do the right thing. However, if he becomes silent and cannot think of a response, he is too emotionally involved. The spouses are continually misperceiving the therapist's involvement."<sup>139</sup> "If the therapist is already emotionally involved, his effort to reverse the emotional process will be heard as sarcastic and mean. Knowledge of triangles is the most effective self in meaningful emotional contact without becoming emotionally overinvolved."<sup>140</sup>

Third is to teach the functioning of emotional systems. In the Bowen therapy, teaching is more necessary; however, in talking *about* emotional systems, teaching rather may be hazards to emotional systems.<sup>141</sup> For example, "when family tension is high, the therapist is vulnerable to being triangled into the system if he tries to instruct them away from a direction that appears unprofitable."<sup>142</sup> In other words, when family anxiety is high at the early in therapy, instructional communication are put in terms of the "I position," which is explained the fourth function. Therefore, "teaching, when anxiety is lower, is done by parables, illustrated by successful clinical solutions of similar problems in other families. Still later, when there is little anxiety, the teaching can successfully be quite didactic."<sup>143</sup>

Lastly, fourth function of Bowenian therapist is to take "I-position" stands. The "I-position" is very useful early in therapy as an operating position in relation to the family, and it is advantage to use it whenever possible through therapy.<sup>144</sup> Bowen

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

said, "A goal of this method of family therapy is to provide a structure in which spouses can proceed as far toward the differentiation of self as the situation and their motivation can take them, and as rapidly as is possible for them."<sup>145</sup>

In viewing overall the Bowen therapy, it is better for the therapist to begin, as early as possible, to coach spouses in differentiating a self in their families of origin. "When a motivated spouse is successful at this, the total process proceeds more rapidly without the alternating pattern that occurs when there is less attention to families of origin."<sup>146</sup> This is, Bowen said, "the most successful and efficient method of family psychotherapy."<sup>147</sup>

Lastly, I will refer the training context and program for the clinician based on Bowen's theory and therapy. David Papero, one of the faculty members of the Family Center at Georgetown University Medical School, informed about it. From Papero's article, one important statement can be found: "The processes described by Bowen theory seem to be universal in families. They are not significantly affected by race, religion, or ethnic background. While the economic status of a family may influence its level of anxiety, the basic processes remain the same. The concept of differentiation of self is applicable to all families. The intensity of the anxiety and the level of differentiation may vary from family to family."<sup>148</sup> Therefore, the Bowen's theory and therapy can apply sufficiently into even the family relationships in the intermarried Korean family.

As mentioned several times already, the most important goal of training, with

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 253.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Papero, 71.

the expression of Papero, is to assist the learner in understanding the concept of differentiation of self and to assist each person to go as far as he or she is able toward increased personal differentiation. And a second goal is to communicate to the trainee the ideas of natural systems and to aid the trainee in thinking differently about old and new phenomena.<sup>149</sup> Now, I will apply the concepts of Bowen's theory and therapy into the intermarried Korean family through four cases related to four major relationships.

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<sup>149</sup> **Ibid.**



## CHAPTER 6

### A Theological Perspective of Family Relationships for Pastoral Care and Ministry in the Church

One of the most adequate definition of family from a theological perspective is that offered by Sang Lee: “A Kinship system of two or more persons which involves a commitment to one another over time in which kinship is achieved by marriage, birth, or adoption.”<sup>1</sup> In this definition, the word “system” will be a channel of dialogue between family therapist and theologian. Bowen’s family emotional system theory is peculiarly different from general family system theory, however, in wider categories, Bowen’s family emotional system theory will be “a partner in dialogue with the Reformed theological tradition.”<sup>2</sup>

The dialogue between theology and the human sciences is acknowledged by John Patton to be most productive when two conditions are met: (1) when it is focused on phenomena common to both disciplines; (2) when each discipline takes seriously the others claim to offer a theoretical, reflective, and useful way of interpreting human phenomena comparable to the other scheme of explication and interpretation.<sup>3</sup>

In discussing about what is commonly called pastoral care of the family, John Patton, assumes that human beings are relational with God and with other person.<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Sang H. Lee, “The Important of the Family: A Reformed Theological Perspective,” in Faith and Families, ed Lindell Sawyers (Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1986), 117.

<sup>2</sup> Charles E. Brown, “Toward a Theology of Family,” Affirmation (Union Theological Seminary in Virginia) 5, no. 1 (spring 1992) : 51.

<sup>3</sup> John Patton, Pastoral Care in Context: Introduction to Pastoral Care (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 238.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

relation with God can be easily categorized as a part of theology, the relation with other person, a part of family therapy. Human beings have both two areas: relation with God and relation with people. Therefore, it is necessary for those, who are either professional pastoral counselors or family therapists or even parish ministers, to view family and family relationships with theological perspective.

Here I will examine the theological reflection of the family relationships with three images: the metaphor of the Family of God, the theological doctrine of *Imago Dei*, and the Trinitarian interpretation of *perichoresis*. This will be just a theological perspective about the family relationship for pastoral care ministry in the church. It also will be just a suggestion of possibility to search for a theological model of family relationships.

### **The Metaphor of the Family of God and Family Relationships**

People refer often the church as the family of God, however, this term should be cautious about its using. Because the church has qualities like family, but the church itself is not a family. It is “as absurd to talk about the church functioning like a super-family as it is to speak of the state as a family.”<sup>5</sup> The usage of the church as the family of God is a metaphor.

Metaphor, as a figure of speech, is different simile using the word such as “like” or “as.” Metaphor means “the application of a word or phrase to an object or concept it does not literally denote, suggesting comparison to that object or concept in as ‘A might

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<sup>5</sup> Don S. Browning and Carol Browning, “The Church and the Family Crisis: A New Love Ethic,” Christian Century 108, no. 23 (7-14 Aug. 1991) : 747.

fortress is our God.”<sup>6</sup> In this point, the divine family of God the Father, Son and Spirit forms the archetype, and for what is to be understood by the imago Dei. The family of humanity is God’s image on the earth. God is the Father of all people and they are His sons and daughters.<sup>7</sup>

John Patton says that “God created human beings for relationship and continues in relationship with creation by hearing us, remembering us, and meeting us in our relationships with one other.”<sup>8</sup> About our relationship with one other, especially, Patton summarizes as follows:

Care of the other, which cannot to be separated from care of self, is based not only on our relation to God and our God-given vocation to care, but also on the fundamental relationship between parent and child, usually between mother and child. All other relationships emerge out of that basic relationship, and disappointment and denial of that relationship results in distortion of all our relationships.<sup>9</sup>

In a word, Patton views pastoral care as “a ministry of the Christian community that takes place through remembering God’s action for us, remembering who we are as God’s own people, and hearing and remembering those to whom we minister.”<sup>10</sup>

The Church, as the household or family of God, reflects the image of Christ in providing a home for the sojourner, a place where he is accepted for who he is in the beloved, a place where all distinctions and barriers are broken down and he may enjoy

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<sup>6</sup> “Metaphor,” Random House Webster’s College Dictionary, 1991.

<sup>7</sup> Randal E. Otto, “The Imago Dei as Familias,” Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 35, no. 4 (1992): 511.

<sup>8</sup> Patton, 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

the life of true community and engage in its promotion among all people.<sup>11</sup> In other expressions, church meetings were not simply public gatherings, but gathering of the family of God.<sup>12</sup> The church is not a community gathered around a minister, but a community of many ministries.<sup>13</sup> The Church, in its essential constitution, is a living icon of the Trinity,<sup>14</sup> which is the principle of the unity of the People of God and of the whole human race.<sup>15</sup> The gift of the Spirit enables self-transcendence to extend in a field of new relationships: to God as “Father” to Jesus as Lord, to other human beings as brothers and sisters in Christ—indeed to the whole of creation as waiting for and bringing forth the total Christ (Rom. 8:19-22).<sup>16</sup>

The doctrine of Imago Dei will be discussed in the next chapter, but the theological understanding that human beings created in the image of God has been conceptualized in a number of ways, however, the doctrine of imago Dei provides an important theological basis for pastoral care. The subtitle of family relationships for pastoral care ministry in the church must be one of the various ministries in the church; however, I believe that family relationships will be more and more one of the most important issues inside the church as well as outside in twenty first century.

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<sup>11</sup> Otto, 513.

<sup>12</sup> Earl C. Muller, Trinity and Marriage in Paul: The Establishment of a Communitarian Analogy of the Trinity Grounded in the Theological Shape of Pauline Thought (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 192.

<sup>13</sup> Patton, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Kelly, The Trinity of Love: A Theology of the Christian God (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1989), 113.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 94.

### **The Interpretation of Theological Doctrine of Imago Dei**

Genesis 1:26-28 has been the church's classic text for the doctrine of the Imago Dei, the image of God in human being, but it also provides an important biblical basis for pastoral care. Many scholars have discussed the doctrine of Imago Dei through a lot of literatures, but I will only focus on the meaning and interpretation of Imago Dei by Karl Barth related to family relationships: *analogia relationis* (an analogy of relation) and *analogia entis* (an analogy of being).

The imago Dei has been widely interpreted as denoting some capacity in the human being which in turn is interpreted as providing the point of departure for articulating knowledge of God.<sup>17</sup> For Karl Barth, however, the imago Dei does not refer to some particular quality, capacity or capability which humankind possesses. Human beings are an image of God as human beings. The image of God in human kind is particularly manifest in the "I-Thou relationship," which the human I-Thou is to be conceived as an image of the divine I-Thou. This is not an analogy of being (*analogia entis*), but an analogy of relation (*analogia relationis*).<sup>18</sup>

The similarity consists, therefore, in the correspondence between the I-Thou relationship of Father and Son, and the I-Thou relationship of man and woman, which he takes to provide the profoundest expression of interpersonal relationship in human realm.<sup>19</sup> However, "in spite of the similarity of correspondence between human and

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<sup>17</sup> Alan J. Torrance, Persons in Communion: An Essay on Trinitarian Description and Human Participation (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1996), 180.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 181.

divine encounter, the divine I-Thou is quite different from the human I-Thou. The I-Thou relationship in God takes place in the one and unique individual, while the I-Thou in man takes place in two different individuals, the man and woman.”<sup>20</sup>

On this criticism, Barth contends that such differentiation will eventually lead us to discover the parent-child relation, not the male-female relation, as the most congruent analogatum in human existence for the divine-human original, even as the male-female relation corresponds most closely to the divine-divine original.<sup>21</sup>

With rereading of Barth’s analogical program, the male-female (husband-wife) relationship is different the parent-child relationship. On the difference between parent-child and male-female relationships Elizabeth Erykberg explains two parts as follows:

First part, in the parent-child relationship:

Since God is of a higher order of being than humankind is, God serves humankind in a way that is superordinate to the way humankind serves God, but still the serving is reciprocal. Similarly, children are existentially dependent upon their parents, however, parents are not existentially dependent upon children. As a consequence, parents serve children in a way that is superordinate to the way children serve them, but still both serve.<sup>22</sup>

Second part, in the male-female relationship,

Correlatively, men are not existentially dependent upon the women of their same generation, nor are women existentially dependent upon the men. Thus, the order mutual self-giving service in adult male-female relations is not of a superordinate-subordinate nature, because by differentiating the analogatum into two parts (male-female and parent-child), the relation between adult partners, male and female, needs no longer bear the analogical weight of functioning as principle

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth A. Erykberg, “The Child as Solution: The Problem of the Superordinate-Subordinate Ordering of the Male-Female Relation in Barth’s Theology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 47 (1994): 330.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 352.

analogatum for relations between both equal and unequal partners.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, Erykberg states that Barth had to maintain the principle of superordinate-subordinate ordering because Barth was comparing male-female relationship to both divine-human (covenant) relationships and divine-divine (perichoresis) relationships.

The image of God is twofold in the Jesus Christ. In explanation at large, Jesus Christ, who is God, participates in inner-divine (I-Thou) relationship with Father and Holy Spirit, and outer-divine (I-Thou) relationship with humanity. And Jesus Christ, who is human, participates in the image of inner divine (I-Thou) relationship with humanity and in the reflected image of outer-divine relationship with God.<sup>24</sup> In other words, Jesus Christ two covenantal asymmetrical differential integrative relationship analogies (divine-human and parent-child) and two perichoretic asymmetric differential integrative relationship analogies (inner-Trinitarian and male-female) become one integrated unity structure.<sup>25</sup>

As Professor Jung Young Lee who suggested his trinitarian thinking with Asian perspective emphasizes, “The image of God is the image of the Trinity, which is given not only to human beings but to all creatures on earth. In other words, the image of God is not simply the dual, personal relationship between male and female or an *analogia relationis*, but is, instead, the trinitarian relationship which is found in all things.”<sup>26</sup> The *analogia* relations between equal and/or unequal partners is characterized by “mutual

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 337.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 353.

<sup>26</sup> Jung Young Lee, The Trinity in Asian Perspective (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 214.

self-giving service.”<sup>27</sup> When the relationship partners are unequal, as in divine-human and parent-child relationships, the mutual self-giving service is experienced as “a covenantal relation.” While, when the partners are equal, as in inner-Trinitarian and adult male-female relations, the mutual self-giving service is *perichoresis*.<sup>28</sup> The concept of *perichoresis* will be examined in the next chapter.

### **The Theological Implication of Trinitarian Perichoresis**

To understand the meaning of the term *perichoresis* more fully, it is necessary to explore further the theological explanation of the doctrine of God, especially the triune God. But because the work is over the limit of this project, I will examine in brief only on Jürgen Moltmann’s concept of person in Trinitarian contexts. And then I will examine the meaning of the Trinitarian *perichoresis* and the relation between trinitarian *perichoresis* and family relationships, especially male and female (husband-wife) relationship.

In brief, instead of starting with traditional monotheism and working towards an understanding of the Trinity, Moltmann observes that the revelation of God in the economy of salvation requires us to start with the Three, and work toward understanding the unity of the Godhead.<sup>29</sup> Moltmann identifies in history two options for understanding the unity of God which have constantly locked Christians into unbiblical monotheism.

In The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, Moltmann states that the church’s traditional of the Trinity derives from the specifically Christian tradition and

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 350.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Eugen Matei, “The Concept of Person in Trinitarian Context: Historical and Ecumenical Perspective,” 1995, on-line, available from Nestcape @<http://private.fuller.edu/~ematei/theolog/articles/3typers.html>



proclamation.<sup>30</sup> Exploring shortly the history of the development of the Trinitarian concept of God, he insists that “First of all we have general, natural theology; the special theology of revelation comes afterwards. Natural theology, accordingly, provides the general framework within which the theology of revelation draws the special Christian picture of God.”<sup>31</sup>

Moltmann, a reform theologian, is attempting to develop “a social doctrine of the Trinity” in distinction to the trinity of substance and to the trinity of subject.<sup>32</sup> He states continuously the development of a social doctrine of the Trinity as follows:

We understand the scriptures as the testimony to the history of the Trinity’s relations of fellowship, which are open to men and women, and open to the world. This trinitarian hermeneutics leads us to think in terms of relationships and communities; it supersedes the subjective thinking which cannot work without the separation and isolation of its object.<sup>33</sup>

Here, thinking in relationships and communities is developed out of the doctrine of the Trinity, and is brought to bear “on the relation of men and women to God, to other people and to mankind as a whole, as well as on their fellowship with the whole of creation.”<sup>34</sup> Therefore, Moltmann’s concept of the person in the triune God provides us a theological framework in thinking family relationships.

Recently, Catherine M. LaCugna, a feminist theologian, refers “a theology of relationship.” She said, “Indeed, trinitarian theology is par excellence a theology of

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<sup>30</sup> Moltmann, 16.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

relationship: God for us, we for God, we to each other.”<sup>35</sup> According to LaCugna, “The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that the essence of God is relational, other-ward, that God exists as diverse persons united in a communion of freedom, love, and knowledge. ... The focus of the doctrine of the Trinity is the communion between God and ourselves.”<sup>36</sup> Reading Moltmann and LaCugna’s arguments, I found a bridge between the trinitarian theological perspective and family relationships. It is the term of *perichoresis*.

The Greek term *perichoresis*, literally meaning “a dancing around together,”<sup>37</sup> was first used by John Damascene, the Greek theologian in the eighth century, “to highlight the dynamic and vital character of each divine person, as well as the coinherence and immanence of each divine person in other two.”<sup>38</sup> Leonardo Boff used this term “to sum up the essence of unity in the trinity and the unity of the natures of God and humankind in Jesus.”<sup>39</sup> Moltmann has defined the concept of *perichoresis* as “the unity and fellowship of the Persons.”<sup>40</sup>

According to Moltmann, the reason of being undeveloped of the concept of the

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<sup>35</sup> LaCugna, 243.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Anthony Kelly, 112. The term *perichoresis*, in Greek theology, means “the circulation of divine interpersonal life,” in other words, “reciprocal coinherence of the divine persons.” Also it is called, in Latin theology, *circumincessio*, “a communion of mutual yielding,” or *circuminssessio*, “a communion of mutual indwelling by Latins.” Therefore, Kelly said, “the model of *perichoresis* avoids the pitfalls of locating the divine unity either in the divine substance (Latin) or exclusively in the person of the Father (Greek), and locates unity instead in diversity, in a true communion of persons” (112).

<sup>38</sup> LaCugna, 270, citing John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodox*, 8.

<sup>39</sup> Boff, 134.

<sup>40</sup> Moltmann, 199.

social doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>41</sup> The result was to make room for the development of individualism, and especially ‘possessive individualism’ in the Western world.<sup>42</sup> What Moltmann wanted through the concept of perichoresis was to avoid all subordinationism in the doctrine of the Trinity,<sup>43</sup> and to develop social personalism or person socialism.<sup>44</sup>

According to the Brazilian theologian Boff, “The term of *perichoresis* gained currency in trinitarian theology, though it is only in recent times that it has come to occupy a central position in this field.”<sup>45</sup> What Boff wanted was to look more closely at what it means as applied to the trinity. Because the concept is central to the relevance of the Trinity to our desire for a society that lives together in more open communion, equality and respectful acceptance of difference.<sup>46</sup>

According to LaCugna, the characteristics of *perichoresis* are as follows: “being-in-one-another, permeation without confusion,”<sup>47</sup> “the foundation of an ethics that upholds three values: inclusiveness, community, and freedom,”<sup>48</sup> “the intradivine model for persons in the human community,”<sup>49</sup> and “the form of life for God and the ideal of

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>45</sup> Boff, 136.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> LaCugna, 271.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 272.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 276.

human beings whose communion with each other reflects the life of the Trinity.”<sup>50</sup>

What LaCugna wanted was to provide an appealing model of God that can be used to support a vision of egalitarian human community,<sup>51</sup> and to propose as alternative form of the personal built around equality, mutuality, and community, rooted in the intradivine Trinity.<sup>52</sup>

These three theologians tried to revise the doctrine of the Trinity using the notion of perichoresis. Moltmann suggested “a social doctrine of the Trinity”<sup>53</sup> to avoid a typically Western bias that social relationship and society are less primal than the person. Boff viewed “the perichoresis-communion model”<sup>54</sup> to present his vision of how social and political life ought to be structured, in other words, his vision of a just society. And LaCugna used “the model of the Divine perichoresis”<sup>55</sup> in a true communion of persons to appeal the value of equality, mutuality, and reciprocity among persons as an essential and divine substance to an adequate trinitarian theology of God as well as to theological anthropology and soteriology.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>53</sup> Moltmann, 199.

<sup>54</sup> Boff, 138.

<sup>55</sup> LaCugna, 274.

## CHAPTER 7

### Application and Interpretation to Four Cases

In this chapter, I will apply the eight concepts of Bowen's theory and therapy such as the term of coaching and genogram into the four family cases: the Mala family, the Ito family, the Jackson family, and the Santiago family. I will interpret the four cases for the four major family relationships: husband and wife, parent and child, siblings, and in-laws. In the process of application and interpretation, I will give my view of three perspectives: (1) husbands' various ethnicity and their unique cultural characteristics, (2) investigations of the Korean family system for Korean wives, and (3) the unique theoretical issues and problems in the intermarried family setting. And I will suggest clinical intervention from a family resource perspective to four cases if I will have a follow-up session for each family.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Mala Family

The *Mala* family is an intermarried family: a Thai American husband, *Sak*, and a Korean American wife, *Jin-suk*. All my data about the family came from the wife. A meeting with the husband was not practical. Though I met only one member of the family, family therapy was focused on the family system, and applied with the concepts of the Bowen's theory.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark A. Karpel, "Testing, Promoting, and Preserving Family Resources: Beyond Pathology and Power," in Family Resources: The Hidden Partner in Family Therapy, ed. Mark A. Karpel (New York: Guilford Press, 1986), 200-30. There are "eight" relatively simple and straightforward interventions that can maximize the family's ability to resolve their own problems: (1) Reframing, (2) Widening the Resource Pool: Bringing Reinforcements into Treatment, (3) Leaving Family Members in Charge, (4) Removing Obstacles / Releasing Resources, (5) Coaching One Person, (6) Challenging, (7) Supporting Available Methods of Coping, and (8) Trust Building.

In the family emotional system, the problems Jin-suk had were (1) rejection from her mother, which caused her to have a hurt and shirking attitude; and (2) her own low self-esteem. Her mother strongly opposed her intermarriage based on traditional Korean family values. The important item to note is that though her mother opposed her marriage, if she had a high differentiation of self, she would have not been emotionally crippled.

According to the differentiation of self-scale, the core concept of Bowen's theory, Jin-suk is in 25-50 range, because the lives of those in the 25-50 range are still guided by their emotions and the reactions of others. And according to Jin-suk's information about Sak, he is in 25-50 range, because his goal-directed behavior such as finding a job and settling financial problems is present but carried out in order to seek the approval of others. Sak easily became dependent upon another woman instead of talking with his wife.

Though Jin-suk had physical distance from her mother, she was not free from unresolved emotional issues. She was not able to emotionally free herself from her family of origin. I could not scale the parents' differentiation of self, when I saw Sak's and Jin-suk's self-scale in 25-50 ranges, I assume the parents had a low differentiation of self. Each spouse had some degree of unresolved emotional conflict with his or her parents. Bowen's principle, the lower the level of differentiation the more intense the unresolved conflict, is apparent in this instance.

Reviewing Bowen's statement, "One spouse becomes the dominant decision-maker for the common self (family), while the other adapts. Both may try for the dominant role, which results in conflict; or both may try for the adaptive role, which

results in decision paralysis,”<sup>2</sup> Both Sak and Jin-suk were in the adaptive roles, which resulted in decision paralysis. Sak seemed dominant, but actually was adaptive. Sak lived for a long time in the adaptive position, he gradually lost the ability to function and make decisions for himself. He became dysfunctional due to emotional and social illnesses such as drinking, and his irresponsible behavior of staying with another woman he met.

During the session, I initially attempted to reduce Jin-suk’s anxiety, and help restore her self-esteem. I tried to help her look at herself objectively. I visited a few of her friends to ensure her spiritual care and she seemed to have her anxiety reduced. She still had fits of depression and anger for her spouse.

I did not explain the concept of differentiation of self, but she seemed to understand the root of her problems and made a start at recovery. I suggested (coached) Jin-suk to try to ignore (neutralize) other woman (the triangle) by encouraging her to maintain her position as wife (her “I-position”) initially based on love and consummated in marriage. As she thought about this suggestion (teaching), she began to realize how much she loved her husband and how much affection and care she gave to the children. She found that her husband did not really love the other woman, but took her as means to escape his problems. She gradually began to recover her-self and understand her husband’s situation and emotional process. She felt some comfort and found an unshakable belief in herself no matter what happened.

After a couple of weeks she began to learn new skills. Sak is still unemployed but no longer strays from home. The marital conflict is not completely resolved, but is on the

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<sup>2</sup> Bowen, 377.

road to recovery. Jin-suk's feeling of rejection by her mother will settle after she forgives herself and mother.

In the Mala family, the two daughters could not become part of the triangle, because they were too young (4 and 1 years old). Jin-suk felt caught between her husband and the other woman. I found the concept of the triangle important to allow her to recover her self-identity and become more differentiated.

If I have an additional follow-up session, I would like to touch spiritually more on Jin-suk's feeling of rejection by her mother. It might be the topic of forgiveness in a theological perspective. Forgiveness is an important theological issue in family relationships as well as in all human relationships. As I mentioned in Chapter 6, Jesus Christ as one Person of the Triune God died on the cross for forgiveness of all human sins. It means the twofold image of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ as God participates in inner-divine relationship with the Father and Holy Spirit. And at the same time, Jesus Christ as human participates in the image of inner divine relationship with humanity and in the reflected image of outer-divine relationship with God.

From the family resources perspective, I also want to use for Jin-suk the an intervention of "challenging." According to Karpel, "challenging refers to a number of interventions, both with individuals and with larger groups that temporarily heighten discomfort and even despair."<sup>3</sup> And Karpel suggests that "while particular forms of challenge, such as positive connotation and restraint from change, may make use of resources *inherent* in presenting problems, challenge is most often directed at generating

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<sup>3</sup> Karpel, 212.



*alternatives to symptomatic patterns.”*<sup>4</sup>

### **The Ito Family**

The Ito family is an intermarried family: a Japanese American husband, *Ben*, and a Korean American wife, *Sun-suk*. The Ito family is the husband's second marriage. Ben is a non-custodial parent. A problem developed when Sun-suk thought Ben's preferred the son by the former wife, Ted, over the new son, John. Ben had conflicting feelings about the two sons. Sun-suk could not accept the role of stepmother to Ted.

Sun-suk selected her baby for the family projection process. Sun-suk's present conflict seemed to be based on the emotional tendency to think more about the children she will have than of the family consisting of husband and wife. She thought the husband's conflict would be solved by another child. She concealed this thought from herself, until visits by the older child began to occur. Sun-suk was pregnant at this time.

Ben had usually been supportive in the projection process. He was sensitive to his wife's anxiety, and he tended to support her view. He wanted to help her efforts at mothering. Ben also selected his first son, Ted, for the family projection process. Though Ben was divorced, he still had emotional problems dealing with his first son. One analysis shows that “divorce appears to have a unique influence on fathers' affection for their children but not on mothers' affection.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 213.

<sup>5</sup> Paul R. Amato and Alan Booth, “A Prospective Study of Divorce and Parent-Child Relationships,” Journal of Marriage and the Family 58, no. 2 (1996): 364.

In the parent-child relationship, it is important to recognize that the parental effort goes into sympathetic and overprotective energy, which is directed more by the mother's anxiety than the needs of the child.<sup>6</sup> In the Ito family, the new child, Ted, is too young (3 years old) to be affected by exposure to the problem, but as Ted grows up during or after adolescence, an intense emotional fusion between mother and child may exist.

Generally, a stepfamily triangle allows the husband and wife to avoid issues. Bowen's concept of triangle in principle, remarried couples, even if only one of the spouses is in a second marriage, often presents one or more triangular event: the wicked stepparent triangle, the perfect stepparent triangle, the ghost of the ex-spouse triangle, and the grandparent triangle.<sup>7</sup> Amongst the four stepparent triangle patterns, the perfect stepparent triangle applies to this case.

Sun-suk as a stepmother is operating off an implicit demand from her husband, Ben, when she takes care of his first son, Ted, as her own. This in spite of the fact that Ted does not reside with them. In this triangle, the stepmother operates as the rescuer, moving toward the stepchild to bond with him.<sup>8</sup> In fact, it is impossible for Sun-suk as a stepmother to have an equal emotional investment in the two sons, no matter how she tries to be fair to both of them. If Sun-suk reacts effectively toward Ted, she can reduce her anxiety and resolve the conflict by accepting the role of Ted's stepmother. Through

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<sup>6</sup> Bowen, 381.

<sup>7</sup> Philip J. Guerin, Jr., Thomas F. Fogarty, Leo F. Fay, and Judith Gilbert Kautto, Working with Relationship Triangles: The One-Two-Three of Psychotherapy (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), 216-20.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 217.

the more mature relationship between a stepmother and son, she can increase her level of differentiation of self and have a higher differentiation in other relationships including Ben and John.

One of the treatment goals in stepfamily triangles is that “after the therapist identifies the most relevant stepfamily triangle and surfaces the process, the clinical management involves shifting the relationships so that they reflect the real picture of each stepfamily member’s role.”<sup>9</sup> In the Ito family, for example, Ben and Sun-suk, as parents, need to carve out a more appropriate role over time, and to have realistic expectations of each other as biological father and stepmother.

As a suggestion, before Ted visits the home, if Sun-suk will prepare a kind of party for Ted with a small gift and will welcome him warmheartedly, the relationship with Ted will be wonderful. She will have to remember that it takes time to accept each other. If she does, she will be able to cut off from the family emotion process her son, John.

Before we go to next case, I will describe some findings from various researchers about the divorce-related transitions, adolescent development, and the role of the parent-child relationship with five points as follows:

First, the percentage of children under 18 years of age living with both biological parents declined from 85% in 1970 to 69% in 1994. The percentage of all children living with a father only increased from 1% to 3% and with mother only increased from 8% to 14%.<sup>10</sup> And because a significant proportion of men and women remarry after divorce, many children will grow up in stepfamilies. In

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1995), cited in Alice M. Hines, “Divorce-Related Transitions, Adolescent Development, and the Role of the Parent-Child Relationship: A Review of the Literature,” Journal of Marriage and the Family 59, no. 2 (1997): 376.

1992, 15% of all children were living with a biological mother and stepfather; among them, about 1% of children, including those across different racial and ethnic group, was living with a biological father and a stepmother.<sup>11</sup>

Second, studies in the area of family relationships and adolescence also have examined qualities of the parent-child relationship that promote or curtail healthy development. If stable family life, minimized economic distress, supportive and intimate relationships, and offered affection and love are given, then adolescent development can proceed along a normal and unstressful path.<sup>12</sup>

Third, most studies of divorce have focused on children under 13 years of age, rather than on adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 years.<sup>13</sup> However compared with children from nondivorced families, children of divorced families are at higher risk for experience difficulties in academic achievement and school adjustment, delinquency, disruptions in peer relationships, precocious sexual behavior, and substance abuse.<sup>14</sup> More recent research suggests that compared with younger children, adolescent girls exhibit more externalizing than adolescent boys. Studies of the process of divorce and family functioning have found that chronic marital conflict produces more adverse effects in children than the divorce itself.<sup>15</sup> And some researchers propose that divorce is more harmful when it occurs during early childhood than during adolescence.<sup>16</sup>

Fourth, in the parent-adolescent relationships in divorcing families, fathers with custody of their children begin by being unduly indulgent and permissive before becoming more restrictive. Custodial fathers report better family adjustment and fewer problems with children than custodial mothers.<sup>17</sup> The quality of the parent-child relationship is not determined solely by the characteristics of the parent, but individual characteristics of the adolescent, including the level of self-development and self-resilience, can have a direct

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1995), cited in Hines, 377.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Offer and Judith Baskin Offer, From Teenage to Young Manhood: A Psychological Study (New York: Basic Books, 1975), cited in Hines, 379.

<sup>13</sup> John W. Santrock, "The Effects of Divorce on Adolescents: Needed Research Perspective," Family Therapy 14, no. 2 (1987) : 147-59, cited in Hines, 379.

<sup>14</sup> Hebert Zimiles and Valerie E. Lee, "Adolescent Family Structure and Educational Progress," Developmental Psychology 27, no.2 (1991) : 314-20, cited in Hines, 379.

<sup>15</sup> James L. Peterson and Nicholas Zill, "Marital Disruption, Parent-Child Relationships, and Behavior Problems in Children," Journal of Marriage and the Family 48 (1986) : 295-307, cited in Hines, 379.

<sup>16</sup> Lawrence A. Kurdek, Darlene Blisk, and Albert E. Seisky Jr., "Correlates of Children's Long-Term Adjustment to Their Parent's Divorce," Developmental Psychology 17, no. 5 (1981) : 565-79, cited in Hines, 380.

<sup>17</sup> Hines, 382.

effect on the quality of the parent-child relationship during adolescence.<sup>18</sup>

Lastly, in the study of the parent-adolescent relationship in stepfamilies, stepparent-child relationships have been characterized as more detached, more conflicted, more negative, less warm, and less involved than parent-child relationships in first marriages.<sup>19</sup> With age, relationship with siblings, peers, and other significant adults are increasingly important in the adjustment of children in divorced and remarried families.<sup>20</sup>

Much of the literature on divorce and adolescent adjustment indicates that the family, especially the parent-child relationship, may be more important for adolescent development than factors related to the divorce itself. Such research indicates that for adolescents in stepfamilies the introduction of new adults into the system can have ameliorative effects.<sup>21</sup>

In a follow-up session, I would like to ask Sun-suk some questions: What happened at a party with Ted? What is your feeling about that party and Ted? And What kind of change occurred in you and Ted? With family resource perspective, I would take an intervention of "Widening the Resource Pool: Bringing Reinforcements into Treatment" for Jin-suk. Because this intervention "actualizes a therapeutic conviction in the potential ability of individuals in the client's closest relationships to serve as resources for them, both in therapy and in everyday life."<sup>22</sup> This intervention might be

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Hines, "Paths of Adolescent Ego Development in Divorcing Families: An Analysis of Parent, Adolescent, and Family Correlates," a paper presented at the conference of the National Council on Family Relations, Portland, Oregon, Nov. 1995, cited in Hines, "Divorce-Related Transitions, Adolescent Development, and the Role of the Parent-Child Relationship: A Review of the Literature," 383.

<sup>21</sup> Hines, 383.

<sup>22</sup> Karpel, 202.

helpful Sun-suk because she needs to cutoff from the family emotion process her son, John. According to Karpel, “individuals with whom a client has painfully polarized or cutoff relationships may be invited into treatment in an effort to remove obstacles and increase mutual concern and availability.”<sup>23</sup>

In a theological perspective of the Ito family relationships, I want to apply the meaning of Barth’s analogical program into the parent-child relationship. Barth said that the male-female (husband-wife) relationship is different the parent-child relationship. With Barth’s anlogical interpretation of the Imago Dei, I also would like to apply the notion of *perichoresis* into the relationship with Ted.

### **The Jackson Family**

The Jackson family is an intermarried family: a Caucasian American husband, *Ronald*, and a Korean American wife, *Mi-suk*. They have four children: Peter, and *Anna*, children by the former wife. *Carol* and Bob, children from this marriage. The Jackson family has typical problems in the parent-child relationship after divorce, the stepparent-child (stepmother-adolescent daughter), and siblings’ relationship between the two sisters by different mothers.

An overview shows the Jackson family can be filed in the category of parent-child relationships after divorce and remarriage. Specifically, the problems or conflicts the Jackson family has can be categorized in the parent-adolescent relationship in the stepfamily. Here, I will focus on the siblings’ relationship. The problem of sibling’ relationships is basically rooted on the parent-child relationship.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 203.

In the concept of triangle, the parent-sibling triangle involves the symptomatic child, a sibling, and one parent. In Jackson family, they are Anna, Carol, and Mi-suk. Anna is a 16 year-old adolescent daughter by the former wife. She was 6 years old when her parents divorced, and has grown up under the stepmother since she was 7. Although Anna was not an adolescent at that time, she was old enough to know the pain of the divorce. And she has spent from preadolescence to now with the stepmother.

Peter, the oldest son, the older brother of Anna, left the family for a military career a year ago. This departure caused a severe loss to Anna. Although their biological father and stepmother treated them generously like other siblings, the relationship between them was enough to be special. The other siblings by the stepmother, Carol and Bob, treated them as their brother and sister, Peter and Anna must have felt a certain delicate discrimination in treatment.

Mi-suk's said, that after Peter left for army, the room was given to the youngest son, Bob. It made Anna angry and hurt. Anna must have expected to use have a room of her own. Anna became more aggressive and began to hate Carol using the same room. Carol was pretty and smart, but a half sister by eight years younger in age to Anna.

Anna's scale of the differentiation of self is in the 25-50, because her relationship with other people is still guided by the emotional system. Her life is relationship-oriented, and major life energy goes to loving and to be loved, and seeking approval from others. In other words, her energy is directed more to what others think than to goal-directed activity. The relationship orientation makes them sensitive of others and use direct action expression of feelings.

As seen in the case study information, Anna's two behaviors prove the

moderate levels of differentiation of self. One is Anna's severe hostility toward Carol.

According to Bowen's statement, "the rebel is lacking a self of his own. Her pseudo-self posture is merely the exact opposite of the majority viewpoint."<sup>24</sup> Another behavior was to submit a blank paper at school. It proves that her social disorder in her school includes "impulsive and irresponsible behavior."<sup>25</sup> Her behavior was designed to relieve the anxiety of the moment.

Carol's differentiation of self is not easy to scale, because a lack of revealed behaviors. I assume that she is emotionally directed from her biological mother. As I mentioned in the Ito family, "the intense emotional fusion between mother and child may exist in which the mother-child relationship remains in positive, symptom-free equilibrium until the adolescent period, when the child attempts to function on his own."<sup>26</sup> When Ronald and her biological mother divorced Anna was 7 years old. Carol was born the next year after Ronald and Mi-suk married. Anna was 8 years old. In the Jackson family, the most difficult position is Anna's. This sibling's relationship and the triangle including Mi-suk began with Carol's birth.

In this sibling-subsystem triangle, Anna occupied the outsider position. Even when this triangle was dormant, its form remained fixed. Sometimes Anna and her younger stepsister would move closer around "girl issues," but in Anna's mind the shadow of her special older brother always was made his presence felt in the sisters'

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<sup>24</sup> Bowen, 368.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 369. See Bowen for discussion of this behavior. And these words were added because theories, not case studies, are in Bowen.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 381.



relationship.<sup>27</sup>

Since I assume that Mi-suk's emotional distress was significant in the adolescent years of Anna's life, I attribute some of Anna's early problems with adjustments to feeding and sleeping schedules. At age 8, Anna had to adjust to the arrival of her baby sister, Carol, and Mi-suk could not give Anna the attention she needed. Anna's response to this tension was to be generally passive and withdraw socially. Anna's behaviors formed a temperamental profile that didn't fit with the expectation of her family any more.

Anna was the child most adversely affected by an increase in tension in her stepmother. Anna's outsider position in the sibling subsystem triangle did not afford her any sibling support in times of tension. The family did not manage well with upset in the stepmother and any expression of negativity by her. This sibling subsystem triangle afforded the family a way of not focusing on the stepmother's problems and a way of displacing its incompetence in dealing with the expression of negative emotion by making them Anna's problem.<sup>28</sup>

The sibling subsystem triangle, has two intervention therapies suggested.<sup>29</sup> One is that therapy needs to improve the attachment between the two sisters (Anna and Carol).<sup>30</sup> Though I met them by chance at the front of a big store, I challenged Carol to

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<sup>27</sup> See Guerin et al., 211.

<sup>28</sup> Refer to Guerin et al., 212.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 212-13.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 212.

understand Anna. I did not explain the fact that the sister-to-sister relationship in the family was not satisfactory; I opened the issue of Carol's emotional reaction to Anna.

Another intervention therapy needed to explore (Anna's) position in the interlocking primary parental triangle and to address the father's less than adequate support of the mother and his weak attachment to (Anna).<sup>31</sup> In a telephone conversation with Mi-suk, I said to talk her husband about the sibling problem including Anna's conflict and to discuss it with Ronald.

According to Gary Bowen and H. Carl Henley, "despite the cultural emphasis on parent-child relationships in Eastern cultures, one study indicates, there were no significant differences, with comparison between Asian-wife, White-wife, and Black-Wife in the U.S. Military, in parent-child relationships satisfaction of husbands or wives across the marital groups."<sup>32</sup> I agree with the statement that "it is important in working with the sibling subsystem triangle to make it explicit that the siblings were not responsible for each other's well being and physical or mental health. They were only responsible for fostering a functional attachment to each other, with an awareness of the potentially destructive nature of fixed triangles."<sup>33</sup>

If I have additional follow-up session, I would like to focus on Anna and talk more with her, because in the Jackson's family the most difficult position is Anna's. I want to listen more her own stories from early childhood to now adolescent daughter

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>32</sup> Bowen and Henley, 34.

<sup>33</sup> Guerin et al., 213.

including her hurt and upset mind with the present problem with her stepsister, Carol and with her stepmother Mi-suk. I think that the family source from Anna can make an important role to approach the Ito family.

With family resource perspective, I will take an intervention of "Removing Obstacles / Releasing Resources." According to Karpel, "it includes therapeutic efforts from a wide range of models which employ a variety of specific techniques; what these efforts share is their attempt to remove obstacles that inhabit or diminish resources in relationships and to make these resources more accessible to the participants."<sup>34</sup> If I meet Anna again, I would like to begin with Anna newly with her own resources to see a deep sense of loyalty and protectiveness concealed by a surface show of defiance, hostility, or indifference.

In this intervention, when Anna come into treatment, I, as a therapist, could discern caring and longing for closeness blocked by bitterness or mistrust, and blocked by even her low self-esteem or vengeful refusal to admit such feelings. Moreover, Anna's ability to show respect and appreciation for another people such as Mi-suk or Carol may be severely limited by unfinished business in other relationships. As these examples suggest, "interventions of this type can affect all of three arenas of family resources (inherent, alternative, and contextual) and virtually any of the personal and relational resources discussed above."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Karpel, 205.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

### **The Santiago Family**

The Santiago family is an intermarried family: a Filipino American husband and a Korean American wife. *Nat* Santiago was in the military and is now an engineer. *Young-suk* is a social worker fluent in two languages. Young-suk's mother, *Jay*, got divorced when Young-suk was 4 years old. Young-suk and her mother have lived together for about 30 years in the same house in both Korea and the United States. Their living style has continued even after Young-suk got married except about two years of her newlywed life. The mother could not stay with her sister due to an incompatible relationship and be a live in babysitter.

The problem of the in-law relationship began when Jay returned to her daughter and son-in-law to take care of her granddaughter. The problem has three parts: (1) Nat's childhood without a warmhearted caring and loving parental guidance; (2) Young-suk's close attachment her mother; and (3) Jay's fixation toward Young-suk.

In Bowen's theory, the Santiago family can be evaluated with the concepts of family project process and emotional cutoff well as the concepts of the differentiation of self and triangle.

The family projection process continued through multiple generations is the concept of multigenerational transmission process. In the Santiago family, Young-suk was the primary object of the family projection process by her mother, Jay. One pattern of the family projection processes is "impairment of one or more children,"<sup>36</sup> which is the pattern that parents (Jay) operate as a "we-ness" to project the undifferentiation to one or

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<sup>36</sup> Bowen, 379.

more children (Young-suk). The “we-ness” is one root in the in-law relationship problem.

The family projection process as an important mechanism has two main variables: One is the degree of the emotional cutoff from the extended family or from a certain important person (Jay, Young-suk’s mother) in the family relationship system; and another variable has to do with the level of anxiety.<sup>37</sup> In the case of Young-suk and Jay, because Jay has brought up her only one daughter as a single mother for about 30 years after divorce, the level of Young-suk’s anxiety must have been high when her daughter married Nat. When the anxiety is high, the symptoms that Young-suk has in the family must have been more intense.

Also, Young-suk’s life pattern of emotional cutoff must have emerged with a lower level of differentiation than her mother or the same level as her mother, because she could not handle her unresolved emotional attachment to her mother.

And, Nat tried to solve the emotional attachment to his father and his stepmother by running away to enter the U.S. Military Academy. His physical distance from his parent failed to solve the emotional conflict. Thus, his level of the differentiation of self developed more internalized symptoms under stress such as depression, marital conflict, and severe conflict with his mother-in-law.

In the concept of the triangle, in-law triangles have three subtypes: “(1) wedding gift triangle; (2) the loyalty alignment triangle; and (3) the dominant father-in-law

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

triangle.”<sup>38</sup> Among them, the loyalty alignment triangle is applicable to the in-law relationship of the Santiago family. According to Guerin et al., “the loyalty alignment triangle centers on primarily on attachment and hierarchy of influence.”<sup>39</sup>

In the loyalty alignment triangle, a partner (Young-suk) and his or her parent (Young-suk’s mother, Jay) remain overly close, with the other partner (Nat) is in the distant position. This triangle occurs when one or both partners (Young-suk) never really leave their family of origin.<sup>40</sup> Young-suk is in an overly close relationship with her mother and her husband is in the outside position in his nuclear family.

When a conflict arose, such as rude behavior or rough attitude or facial expressions. The person who had the most influence over Nat might still be Jay, his mother-in-law. In this triangle, Young-suk had real difficulty in shifting household loyalty to her husband. Young-suk and her mother were going through an emotional attachment. Her mother should rightly concede the change in Young-suk’s status in the family from her daughter to Nat’s wife.

In the therapy of this in-law triangle, I tried to help them look at themselves objectively. Especially I concentrated on Jay’s role. First I started with the most proximate, symptomatic triangle. Nat and I eventually talked about Nat’s father and his stepmother. In that session, I found to need to set up an increasing primacy in the marital bond with Young-suk without doing damage to the relationships Nat had with his mother-in-law. Then, I helped Nat and Young-suk in developing an ability to sort out the

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<sup>38</sup> Guerin et al., 173.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 176.

conflicts to affect them and to be able to arrive at their own positions as a husband and a wife. Lastly, I suggested to make Jay shift the displaced conflict and bitterness to the appropriate relationship context, and to deal with it.

In the additional follow-up session, in the one hand, I would like to focus on Young and Jay without Nak, because Young-suk was closely attached with her mother and Jay was fixed toward her daughter. In the other hand, I would like to focus on Young-suk and Nak without Jay as a couple therapy. Of course, Jay also is an important person in the in-laws relationship of the Santiago family.

In the family resource perspective, I would take an intervention of “Trust Building.” Because this intervention “involves an effort to facilitate dialogue between individuals in close relationships, dialogue in which they can examine actions, events, and long-term patterns that have diminished trust on one or both sides.”<sup>41</sup> Also this might involve a grown daughter (Young-suk) talking with a parent (Jay) who had physically abused (attachment or fixation) her during childhood.<sup>42</sup> And “it requires that at least one party take responsibilities for planning and initiating such a dialogue, and that both parties try to present their own claims and be willing to acknowledge what they see. ... This means that both parties present their sides of the relationship—their experience of what has transpired, their sense of the fairness and unfairness of that experience, and their sense of what they deserve now from that relationship.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Karpel, 219.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

According to Karpel, because trust building has “a positive snowball effect,”<sup>44</sup> and it “serves primarily to change the relational context of presenting problems.”<sup>45</sup>

When trust is increased, various resources in other personal and relational resources become more available. Therefore, if I meet them again, and they have dialogue each other, I hope that the relationship between Nak and Jay, between Young-suk and Jay, and consequently between Nak and Young-suk will be trusted and restored.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.



## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Summary**

Through four different intermarried cases, I tried to show the four major relationships in the family: husband-wife relationship, parent-child relationship, siblings' relationship, and in-law relationship. In fact, each relationship has specific characteristics and problems to deal with. Many researchers have reported the findings from their data and statistical numbers. But, I focused on four major relationships as well as on case studies themselves.

To effectively deal with these problems between family relationships in the situation of the intermarried family, I examined basic understanding of intermarriage and ethnicity including the characteristics of the three Asian families: Thai, Japanese, and Filipino family, and the characteristics of the Military family for American military husbands. The term of ethnicity is different from that of race, but in the relation between ethnicity and family therapy, the therapist's role is important. The intermarriage means the marriage with people whose religious, racial, or ethnic background is or were different from each other's, either prior to or after their marriage. Two theoretical models for intermarriage are assimilation model, by Gordon, means a process of boundary reduction that can occur when members of two or more societies or of small cultural groups meet, and structural model, by Blau, means the model useful in understanding intergroup relations. And, one of theoretical basis for intermarriage therapy, Ecosystemic approach maintains that imbalance and conflict may arise from any focus in the transactional field.

Confucianism, the teachings of Confucius (551–479 B.C.), as a basis of the traditional Korean family system, began as a set of principles and rituals aimed at harmonizing human relationships, and has now become more a guide to social behavior. Three of five human relationships are related to the family: (1) father and son, (2) husband and wife, (3) ruler and subject, (4) elder and younger, and (5) friend and friend. The most important motivation for marriage in the traditional Korean family was to continue the patrilineal family line and to obtain a daughter-in-law to serve the parents. And even though it is true that traditional parent-child relationships, which have two aspects: parent's expectation toward children and children's expectation toward parents, are currently changing, the familial function of the parent-child relationship is still an important aspect. Some conflicts between traditional and contemporary Korean family system can be exemplified as follows: (1) the dualistic conflict between ancestor-oriented and ego-oriented principle; (2) the unclear role conflict between husband and wife; (3) the tension in the expectation of parent-child relationship.

The characteristics of the Korean American family in the United States, one of the fastest growing ethnic groups, are remarkable in the husband-wife relationship and the parent-child relationship. The cause of the problems between immigrant husband and wife can be classified into following categories: (1) socio-cultural (2) ecological, and (3) economical factors. The conflict between Korean immigrant parent and the next generation is due to the cultural value differences. And Korean American family is different from Korean intermarried families.

The characteristics of Korean women intermarried to American husbands are uniquely intertwined with three family systems: the Confucian values of the Traditional

Korean family, the changing modern values of the contemporary Korean family, and the American cultures of the intermarried family. Therefore, the categories of conflicts in the intermarried Korean woman's family are almost the same that of the traditional Korean family and the Korean American family. If differences, they are communication difficulty and cultural misunderstanding between husband and wife, cultural conflict between American husband's child discipline and Korean mother's method of childrearing.

The core of Murry Bowen's theory, which is characterized by the emotional family system different from family system theory, has to do with the degree to which people are able to distinguish between the feeling process and the intellectual process. And Bowen's theory involves the degree of anxiety and the degree of integration of the differentiation of self. Three of eight important interlocking concepts of Bowen's theory apply to over-all characteristics of the family: starting with the differentiation of self, the cornerstone of the Bowen's theory of human relationships, triangles, and nuclear family emotional system; the other five concepts focus on details within certain areas of the family: family project process, multigenerational transmission process, sibling position, emotional cutoff, and societal regression.

In the principles and techniques of Bowen's family therapy, the "being" of the therapist is important to promote differentiation in a family. In other words, the goal of Bowen's therapy is to decrease anxiety and to increase the level of differentiation of self. In Bowen, family therapy regards as a way of conceptualizing a problem rather than as a process. Family evaluation interviews begin with a history of the presenting problem, focusing on the symptoms – physical, emotional, and social – and their impact on the

person or relationship. And family evaluation interviews include the history of the nuclear family and the extended family. Also, the concept of the genogram can be used as a schematic diagram of the family relationship system based on the genetic tree. And the term “coaching” as an active expert helps individuals change the nature of their relationships with parents, siblings, and other extended family members.

With the concepts of Bowen’s theory and therapy, the application and interpretation to these problems related to four major family relationships through four cases are in brief summarized as follows:

The marital problems in husband-wife relationship that could be found through the Mala family were weak communication, financial crisis by unemployment, sexual conflict by cultural difference, escape through gambling, family violent, emotional loneliness, and rejection feeling from parent, etc. Viewing with the concepts of the Bowen’s theory, their common problems were low in the differentiation of self and in the adaptive roles, which results in decision paralysis. The husband seemed dominant, but actually was adaptive. He became dysfunctional due to emotional and social illness such as drinking, and his irresponsible behavior of staying with another women he met.

The problems in parent-child relationships that could be found in the Ito family, especially in the parent-child relationship after divorce, were the postdivorce father’s more unfair affection for the son by the former wife than the son by the present wife, the present wife’s predication to accept as a stepmother the son by the former wife, and the parent’s conflict of giving fair affection to both sons by the former wife and by the present wife. Viewing the concepts of Bowen’s theory, their common problems were the family projection process. Husband selected his first son for the family projection

process, the present wife selected her son for the family projection process. It also could be allowed applying the concept of a stepfamily triangle to avoid issues by husband and wife each other.

The problems in siblings' relationships that could be found through the Jackson family were general conflict in relationship by sibling position, difficulties in the relationship with two children by the former wife, and the adolescent characteristics and their disobedient reaction to parent, especially to the stepmother and biological father. Viewing the concepts of Bowen's theory, their problems were applicable to the concept of the sibling-subsystem triangle. In the sibling-subsystem triangle, the parent-sibling triangle involves the symptomatic child, a sibling, and one parent. Especially, the symptomatic child's outsider position in the sibling subsystem triangle did not afford his or her any sibling support in times of tension.

The problems in in-law relationship that could be found through the Santiago family were generally in-law blaming, loyalty issues (triangulation), and holding grudges. But, specifically, husband's low differentiation of self formation by having little warmhearted caring and loving parental guidance, wife's close attachment her mother, and wife's mother's fixation toward the wife. Viewing the Bowen's theory, their problems could be evaluated with the concepts of family project process and emotional cutoff as well as the concepts of the differentiation of self and triangle. Above all, among of in-law triangle types, loyalty alignment triangle is applicable to the in-law relationship of the Santiago family. In loyalty alignment triangle, a partner (wife) and his or her parent (wife's mother) remain close, with the other partner (husband) is in the distant position.

Lastly, I examined the theological reflection of the family relationships with three images: the metaphor of the Family of God, the theological doctrine of Imago Dei, and the Trinitarian interpretation of perichoresis. This is just a theological perspective about the family relationship for pastoral care ministry in the church. And it also suggests possibility to search for a theological model of family relationships as another next work.

The church as the family of God is a metaphor, in the point, the divine family of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit forms the archetype, and for what is to be understood by the Imago Dei. Therefore, if the family of humanity is God's image on the earth, God is the Father of all people and they are His sons and daughter.

The theological doctrine of Imago Dei provides not only an important Biblical basis for pastoral care but also an analogical implication about the family relationships. In Imago Dei, the important point is that the image of God is twofold in Jesus Christ. According to Karl Barth's explanation, Jesus Christ, who is God, participates in inner-divine (I-Thou) relationship with Father and Holy Spirit, and outer-divine (I-Thou) relationship with humanity. And Jesus Christ, who is human, participates in the image of inner divine (I-Thou) relationship with humanity and in the reflection image of outer-divine relationship with God. Thus, human beings are an image of God as human beings, and the image of God in human beings is particularly manifest in the "I-Thou relationship"; the human I-Thou is to be conceived as an image of the divine I-Thou. This is, Karl Barth contends, not an analogy of being (*analogia entis*), but an analogy of relation (*analogia relationis*). The analogia relation between equal and/or unequal partners is characterized by "mutual self-giving service." This mutual self-giving service is *perichoresis*.

The Greek term *perichorsis*, literally a dancing around together, means the circulation of divine interpersonal life, in other words, reciprocal coinherence of the divine persons. The model of perichoresis avoids the pitfalls of locating the divine unity either in the divine substance or exclusively in the person of the Father. That is perichoresis means being-in-one-another, permeation without confusion.

### **Prospect: Possibilities**

Next, I will propose the possibilities of a Trinitarian *perichoresis* model of family relationships that considers the theological dimension of the family relationships as crucial for the pastoral care and ministries of the church as the twenty first century approaches. As McGoldrick said, “The more we know about our families, the more we can know about ourselves.”<sup>1</sup> And for the recovery of those people who I met and shared with their family relationships and for the opening a new “Korean Family Counseling Center” in a near future, I would like citing again the statement of A. Bartlett Gimatti. “Home is a concept, not a place, it is a state of mind where self-definition starts; it is origins –the mix of time and place and smell and whether wherein one first realizes one is an original....Home....remains in the mind as a place where reunion, if it were ever to occur, would happen....It is about restoration of the right relations among things---and going home is where that restoration occurs, because that is where it matter most.”<sup>2</sup>

Barth, in his first discussion of the Trinity in I/1, employed “the ancient doctrine of *perichoresis* to describe an interpenetration and exchange of functions among the three

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<sup>1</sup> Monica McGoldrick, *You Can Go Home Again: Reconnecting with Your Family* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 21.

<sup>2</sup> A. Bartlett Gimatti, *Take Time for Paradise* (New York: Summit Books, 1989), cited in McGoldrick, 17.

divine persons without loss of their individual distinctiveness.”<sup>3</sup> In the light of Barth’s doctrine of the Trinity, we can say that “the *perichoretic* possibilities of a God, who is human, means that, in the power and grace of his humanity, we also as women and men can be who we are even as we commit ourselves to relationships of mutuality and reciprocity.”<sup>4</sup> McKelway concludes that “if being human, “male and female,” depends upon the maintenance of a relationality imaged in the Trinity, then the possibility of authentic personal individuality depends upon our being in that kind of relationship with our partners in co-humanity.... This means that within the perichoretic possibilities of human existence, females and males are not defined exclusively by the typical actions and attitudes that belong to their sex.”<sup>5</sup>

Moltmann explores the eastern concept of *perichoresis* to understand the unity in the Godhead. The divine persons exist not only to each other in relationship, but also in each other.<sup>6</sup> Moltmann finds the concept of *perichoresis* to be best not only for describing the relationships within the Godhead, but also the relationship between God and creation, as well as the relationship between different elements of creation. The use of *perichoresis* allows him to see the whole of creation and human history as taking place in God.<sup>7</sup>

Karl Barth draws an analogy between the image of the triune God and human marriage in section 45 of Church Dogmatics 3/2, entitled “Man in His Determination as

<sup>3</sup> Alexander J. McKelway, “Perichoresis Possibilities in Barth’s Doctrine of Male and Female,” Princeton Seminary Bulletin, ns 6, no. 3 (1985) : 240.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>6</sup> Matei, 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.



the Covenant-Partner of God.”<sup>8</sup> From Barth and Moltmann, we can gain insight into the source and goal of family life. The family is created so as to reflect the unity of diversity that occurs between Father and Son in the Holy Spirit. The same love that Jesus gave us on the cross is the Spirit which binds father and Son into one God.<sup>9</sup>

There are important implications of this view of the family for theologians, and there are important implications of this view of God for family therapists.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, with Barth’s Christ-centered view, Jesus Christ is both a reflection of the inner life of God and the criterion for family life. By looking at the family in the light of Christ we can see God and the family as well as the proper relation between the two.

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<sup>8</sup> Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, 3/2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), 179.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Casner, “The Family as a Reflection of the Triune God: Karl Barth’s Christocentric View of God as a Bridge between Family Studies and Theological Studies,” paper presented at the Christian Scholars Conference, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas, 18 July 1997, on-line, available from Nestcape@<http://www.christianscholars.acu.edu/97/papers/casner.html>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

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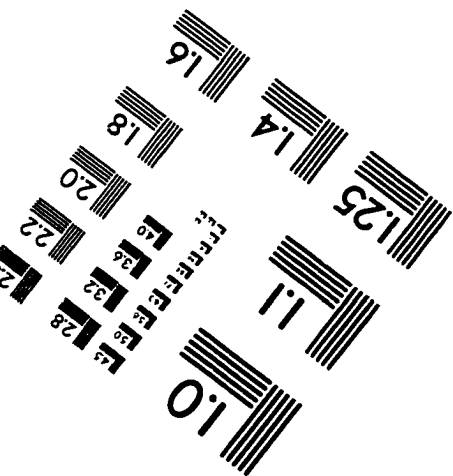
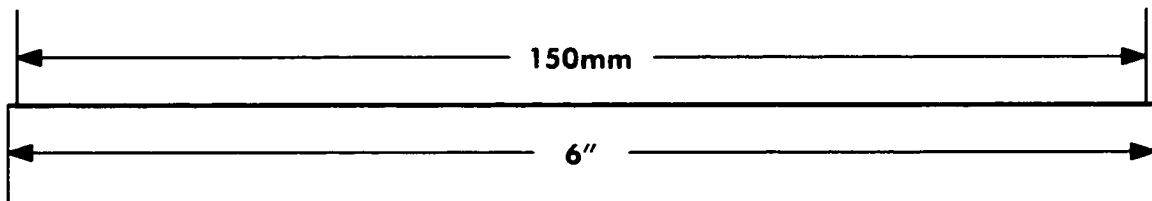
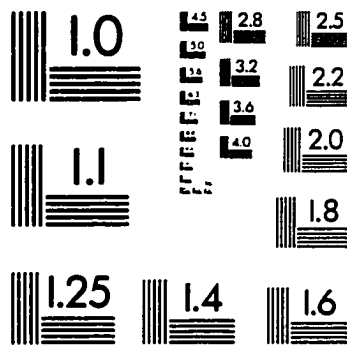
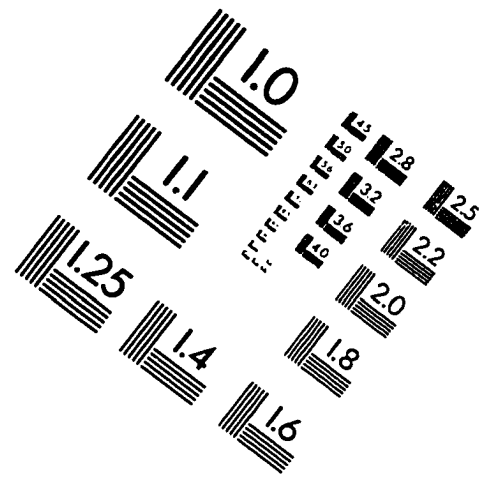
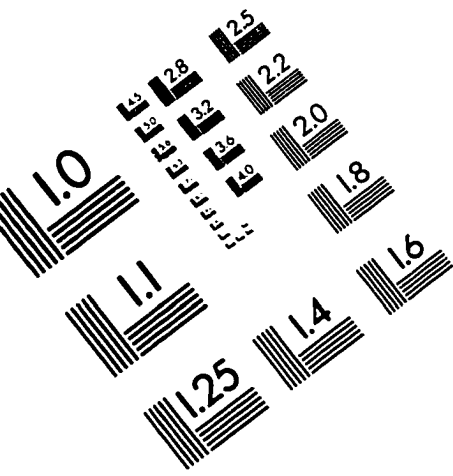
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